

THE SIGNIFICANCE FOR PROCLAMATION OF THE
INTERDEPENDENCE OF PROTOLOGY AND SOCIETAL ETHOS
IN THE COMMUNAL HYMNIC PSALMS

A Professional Project
Presented To
The School of Theology at
Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 1978

This professional project, completed by

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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FOREWORD

Working among the congregations of the United Methodist Churches of Ontario and West Covina, California has afforded me the opportunity to reflect on the role of preaching for our times.

The inspiration for this project has come from the Faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont. I owe a debt of gratitude for the influence of John Cobb Jr. in the area of Process Studies, Dean Freudenberger in World Development, Jack Coogan and Steve Jackson in the Arts of the Ministry and Communication, Loren Fisher who taught me Ugaritic, Morgan Edwards, Eric Titus and Ronald Osborn in the various areas of Preaching and especially to Henry Kuizenga and Rolf Knierim who served as my committee.

I am thankful to Henry for insights into hermeneutics, the role of preaching in worship and preaching as oral communication. I am thankful to Rolf for his seminars on Old Testament Form Criticism, Tradition History and Hermeneutics.

In addition I am thankful for the opportunity afforded me by the Uniting Church in Australia for permission to be studying abroad and for their grant of long service leave part of which time has enabled me to complete this project.

I wish to thank the administration of the School of Theology for the assistance they have given me over a period of four years and particularly for the guidance of Lynn Jackson, the Dean of Students and the assistance of Sue Ruffner, the Registrar and Dick Denton.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my debt to my family, to my wife Phyllis who has encouraged me in my work, to my mother and father and Phyllis' mother who have supported me in various ways, to my sister-in-law, Joan and her husband Barry for their hospitality during the finalization of the first draft of this project, to Chris Johnson for her typing of the final draft, to my wife Phyllis who helped in the proof-reading of the final draft and to my children, Meralisa and Grant for their encouragement and patience.

I dedicate this project to preachers and congregations everywhere and particularly to the Parish of the Uniting Church in Mildura whence I was called during the formation of this project.

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ABSTRACT

Preaching on the interdependence of protology and societal ethos has taken on an urgency in the light of the need of the world to make a transition to a just and sustainable world society.

The suitability of the communal hymnic psalms as material for such preaching is evidenced by their presentation of the total spectrum of the above 'interdependence'.

Recognition of the fact that Israel's understanding of creation grew out of her faith in God who sustained her from her origins leads us to reflect upon God's creative and sustaining work in the light of our experience as Christians.

Preaching on the 'interdependence' theme is mandatory for the proclamation of a full orb ed gospel that is concerned for the redemption both of the created world order and of human society.

It requires a hermeneutic which distinguishes between the Israelite world view and our own. The hermeneutic of the 'fusion of horizons' enables our world view to become fused with the biblical view.

An appreciation of the tradition history of 'interdependence' enables us to distinguish between what aspects of the Israelite world view we may accept or reject.

It leads us to participate in the continuance of the tradition history process by interpreting the significance of the Israelite world view for us.

Preaching affords us the opportunity to continue this tradition for the purpose of human transformation. Use of the communal hymnic psalms in preaching and in the context of worship enables us to humbly appreciate that our efforts of justice and sustainability depend on God as our Creator and Sustainer. Such a pre-occupation of mind is conducive to the advocacy of the God-humanity-nature relationship and to the transition to a just and sustainable society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Presenting the Problem

The problem confronting us in this dissertation is to identify the interdependence of protology and societal ethos in the communal hymnic psalms and to determine the significance for proclamation of that interdependence.

The significance for proclamation may apply to several areas of communication including the media, education and worship. But we will concentrate in the area of worship on preaching which is a mode of proclamation that is most suitable for the transmission of the ideology and world view of the 'interdependence'.

The current threat to the earth and its biosphere in terms of its prospects for survival presents the church with a challenge to respond in its preaching so that the earth may be sustained and its inhabitants live in a just relationship with one another.

An examination of the biblical conception of protology and societal ethos in their inter-relationship will lay the foundation for the hermeneutical task of understanding that relationship and for the role of preaching on the theme of such interdependence as one of the agencies for the achievement of a just and sustainable

world society.

The exercise is in essence a motif study involving the motifs that are subsumed under the headings of protology and societal ethos and which are part of the ideology and world view of the interdependence.

Protology applies to God's creation and sustenance while societal ethos applies to the human response of justice and sustainability.

Protology has been distinguished from soteriology,¹ but in our study the soteriological concept of Heilsgeschichte is shown to cohere so closely with the creation motif that it is subsumed under the motif of God's sustenance and is regarded together with creation as an ingredient of protology.

In general, the words representing the Old Testament motif of God's creation refer to past events and are expressed in the perfect tense. They represent a variety of ideologies including 'word', 'conflict' and 'wisdom' traditions.

These representations of creation as a process of past events are to be distinguished from concepts that have emerged later in the tradition history and which convey the

¹Gerhard von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), p.132.

notion of continuing creation.²

On the other hand it is the motif of God's sustenance in the Israelite view which refers to continuing events. The words denoting this motif are expressed by the present, perfect and imperfect tenses. They express themes such as natural events, Heilsgeschichte and the election, covenant, kingship and justice of Yahweh.

The motif of human justice pertains to the ideology behind the societal institutions which administer law and government, justice and righteousness.

The motif of human sustainability applies to the societal structures that are concerned about the function and stability of the created world order, that is, of nature in general, the maintenance of peace and the covenant with God whereby ordered and just Israelite rule is perpetuated.

The English translation of the Hebrew words used to denote these motifs is taken from Lisowsky,³ whereas a free translation approximating to the Revised Standard Version is used for longer Hebrew quotations.

²For an example of the concept of continuing creation, see the Yotzer Or in William G. Storey, "Liturgy of the Hours: Cathedral Versus Monastery", Worship, L:1 (January 1976), 54.

³Gerhard Lisowsky, Konkordanz zum hebräischen alten Testament (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1958).

II. Methodology

The motifs that have been mentioned are expressed by a variety of linguistic signals consisting of morphemes, phonemes, words, phrases, tricola, bicola, cola and themes. Some of the word signals are categorized as follows:

A. Linguistic Signals Identifying the Motifs of Protology and Societal Ethos

1. Protology as creation (PC)

Words signalling 'word', 'conflict', 'wisdom' and 'undetermined' types of creation tradition:
 צוה (*to order, command*), עשה (*to make, work, create, to be made*), עשה (*creator*), קנין (*creature*),
 ברא (*to create*), כון (*to establish, prepare, provide*), יסד (*to found, fix*), יצר (*to form, fashion*),
 רקיע (*firmament*), רקע (*to spread out*),
 נפלאום (*wonderful deeds*), נטה (*to stretch out, incline*), תכן (כון, *established*), מכון (כון, *foundation*).

2. Protology as sustenance (PS)

Words, phrases and sentences expressing natural events, Heilsgeschichte, election and the kingship of Yahweh as well as sustenance language containing the following words:

חק (*rule, law, statute*), חקה (*statute*),
 מצוה (*commandment*), צוה (*to order, command*),
 שפט (*to judge*), דין (*to judge*), דיין (*a judge*),
 תורה (*instruction, law*), עדה (*law*),
 עדות (*testimony, law, command*), פקודים (*orders, precepts*), פקד (*to appoint, visit*),
 מישרים (*fairness, equity*), משפט (*judgement, ordinance*), צדק (*right, righteousness*),
 צדק (*to be just*), צדקה (*righteousness*),
 צדיק (*the righteous*), אמונה (*faithfulness*),
 נאמנה (*to be perfect*), ישר (*right*),
 שלום (*welfare, peace, salvation*), עזר (*to help*),
 עזר (*help*), ישע (*to help, save*), ישע (*help, salvation*), עזרה (*help*), עזר (*helper*),
 מצודה (*fortress*), משגב (*refuge*), מעון (*refuge, dwelling place*), צור (*rock*), סלע (*rock*),
 חיל (*to shake*), מחסה (*refuge*), פלט (*to deliver, save*), חלץ (*to deliver*), נצל (*to deliver, save*),
 מגן (*shield*), שמר (*to preserve, keep*),
 עשה (*to do*), יצר (*to fashion*), עשה (*creator*),
 פעל (*to work, do; doers*), מלך (*to reign*),
 מכוון (*foundation*), נפלאות (*wonderful deeds*), דרך (*way, conduct, manner*), כוון (*to prepare, provide*), עשק (*to oppress*), עני (*poor, oppressed*), גר (*stranger*), אביון (*low, helpless*),
 גור (*to sojourn*), יתום (*orphan*), אלמנה (*widow*),
 ברית (*covenant*).

3. Societal Ethos as justice (EJ)

Passages that express the human function of government as well as justice language containing the following words:

חק (*rule, law, statute*), חקה (*statute*),
 מצוה (*commandment*), אביון (*low, helpless*),
 דל (*helpless*), עני (*poor, oppressed*), חלץ (*to deliver*)
 דין (*to judge*), עדה (*precept, law*), עדות (*testimony,*
law, command), עשה (*to do*), תורה (*law*), שפט (*to judge*)
 שפט (*judge, judgement*), מישרים (*equity*),
 מישור (*equity*), דרך (*way, conduct*), פעל (*to do, doers*),
 נצר (*to keep*), משפט (*judgement, ordinance*),
 צדק (*right*), צדיק (*the righteous*),
 צדקה (*righteousness*), ישר (*right*).

4. Societal ethos as sustainability (ES)

Passages that express the function of humanity in natural events as well as sustainability language containing the following words:

תורה (*instruction, law*), שלום (*welfare, peace*
salvation), ברית (*covenant*), פעל (*to do*),
 מחסה (*refuge*), חסה (*to seek refuge*), סלע (*rock*).

B. The Procedure of the Chapters

The remaining sections of this chapter pertain to

the materials used and the limitations of our study.

Section III gives the categorization of the communal hymnic psalms which has been derived from the various combinations of words indicated in Section II - words which are understood in their context and which give expression to the motifs. The list of words is not exhaustive, but any addition to them has not altered the categorization that we have presented.

The classification of these psalms according to their genre is made out of consideration of the work of significant scholars known for their psalm research, but it is not intended to replace what could be an extensive piece of research on the genres of the psalms.

One problem in psalm research is that there has been much variability in the matter of the classification of the hymns of praise.

Claus Westermann distinguished between declarative psalms of praise of the people, declarative psalms of praise of the individual, descriptive psalms of praise and eschatological psalms of praise.⁴

Elmer Leslie has differentiated between psalms that reveal God in nature and those that reveal God in history,⁵

⁴Claus Westermann, The Praise of God in the Psalms (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1961), pp. 7,18.

⁵Elmer Leslie, The Psalms (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 11,12.

while Bernhard Anderson divided praise hymns into hymns of praise to the creator of the universe, to the creator who chose Israel, to the creator as lord of history and a doxology.⁶

Other sub-groupings of the genre 'hymn' have been made by psalm researchers such as Pius Drijvers⁷, Samuel Terrien⁸, Christoph Barth⁹, Artur Weiser¹⁰ and Erhard Gerstenberger¹¹.

In the light of the above confusion in classifying the hymns of praise, we turn to the earlier work of Hermann Gunkel and Sigmund Mowinckel. We will take up this discussion in Section IV of this chapter, in which several of the hymns that Gunkel designated with the genre 'hymn' we have designated as 'general hymns of praise'.

⁶Bernhard W. Anderson, Out of the Depths (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p.170.

⁷Pius Drijvers, The Psalms, Their Structure and Meaning (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), The Appendix.

⁸Samuel Terrien, The Psalms and their Meaning for Today (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1952), pp.34,39f.

⁹Christoph Barth, Introduction to the Psalms (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p.14.

¹⁰Artur Weiser, The Psalms. A Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p.60.

¹¹Erhard Gerstenberger, "Psalms" in John H. Hayes (ed.) Old Testament Form Criticism (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), p. 213.

Section IV also gives the other categories of the genre 'hymn' that comprise the communal hymnic psalms. The communal character of these psalms limits their number to 39. Such psalms provide an adequate abundance of the motifs of protology and societal ethos, yet are not too copious to handle.

Chapters TWO and THREE contain two stages of the analysis of the modes of independence and interdependence that occur between the motifs of protology and societal ethos.

For the purpose of such analysis, it would be too extensive a task to examine each hymn as a whole. Thus the hymns are to be examined according to the various modes that are found in each category. The modes to be examined in this manner are those of frequency, the loci of dominance, the generic distribution, the tradition history of the relationship between the motifs and their setting.

The mode of frequency refers quantitatively to the occurrence of the linguistic signals that symbolize the motifs and qualitatively to the ideas and themes which express those motifs but which are beyond exact quantification.

The mode of the locus of dominance may refer to the place where the greater frequency occurs. In addition it refers to the place in the sentence structure such as the main clause where one motif becomes dominating in relation to others. The latter which serve an ancillary function

appear in relative clauses or phrases or occur in apposition to the main ideas.

The mode of generic distribution of the communal hymnic psalms refers to the distribution of the motif categories among the different types of psalms comprising the hymnic genre, viz., general hymns of praise, royal hymns, victory songs, etc.

For the sake of brevity the modes of tradition history and setting will be treated in generalized fashion in both of Chapters TWO and THREE.

The mode of tradition history will be derived from a consideration of the previous mentioned modes and is best articulated in terms of probability and described in terms of both oral and written stages.

The mode of setting refers to those institutions in Israelite society in which the texts and their motifs find their social expression. The institutions of cult, kingship, the gate and the sages are reflected in the texts whether the texts contain the motifs in independence or interdependence.

These institutions are not only involved in the setting of an individual psalm but are also the background and source for the several motifs, motif-affinities and dependency configurations that appear within the psalms.

Chapter FOUR cumulatively builds on the previous chapters. It deals with the Israelite world view taking into account the primary and secondary nature of the motifs

ingredient in that view. The procedure of analysis gives us a tradition history perspective of the world view. The chapter culminates in an understanding of the God-humanity-nature relationship in the light of the text and the possible or probable institutional setting.

Chapter FIVE draws out the significance for preaching of this study, resulting from an analysis of appropriate principles of hermeneutic to interpret the difference between the Israelite world view and ours. The hermeneutics of bridging the gap between these world views and the implications of the fusion of these horizons will be discussed.

The significance of this hermeneutic for preaching will be discussed in relation to the need to advocate a new societal ethos and to achieve a just and sustainable world society. The value of preaching on the communal hymnic psalms with such a goal in mind will be evaluated.

Chapter SIX deals with general conclusions.

III. The Categorization of the Materials: Communal Hymnic Psalms Reflecting the Interdependence of Protology and Societal Ethos

A. Psalms expressing either Protology or Societal Ethos

1. Protology

a. Protology as sustenance: Pss. 29; 46; 47; 48; 66:1-12; 67; 76; 77:14-21; 87; 93; 98; 113; 114; 129; 135.

b. Protology both as creation and sustenance: Pss. 19; 65; 89:6-19; 96; 100; 124; 136; 150.

2. Societal ethos both as justice and sustainability: Ps. 122.

B. Psalms expressing the Interdependence of Protology and Societal Ethos

1. The total spectrum of protology both as creation and sustenance and societal ethos both as justice and sustainability: Pss. 78; 104; 105.

2. The protology-societal ethos interdependence partially expressed.

a. Protology as sustenance and societal ethos both as justice and sustainability: Pss. 72:1b-19; 132.

b. Protology as sustenance and societal ethos as justice: Pss. 68; 97; 99; 147.

c. Protology both as creation and sustenance

and societal ethos as justice: Pss. 33;
95; 146; 148; 149.

d. Protology both as creation and sustenance
and societal ethos as sustainability: Ps. 8.

IV. The Classification of the Communal Hymnic Psalms According to their Genre

The following psalms are classified by Gunkel¹² as hymns (Hymnen): Pss. 8; 19; 29; 33; 65; 67; 68; 96; 98; 100; 103; 104; 105; 111; 113; 114; 117; 135; 136; 145; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150. Most of these psalms are communal in character. Those that bear the marks of an individual type are Psalms 8; 103 and 111 with their use of the first personal pronoun.

However Psalm 8 is included by Westermann¹³ among the Descriptive Psalms of Praise despite the 1p. pronoun in verse 4 and there is no dispute about its communal character as there is with his category of the Declarative Hymn of Praise where there are individual and communal sub-classifications. Psalm 117 is probably a fragment of some originally larger psalm and we have not included it.

We have included as communal hymns other psalm genres which Gunkel¹⁴ has listed as hymns: Zion Songs (Zionslieder), Pss. 46; 48; 76; 87 and 122, Enthronement

¹²H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933), p.32.

¹³Westermann, p. 139.

¹⁴Gunkel, p.32

Songs (Thronbesteigungslieder), Pss. 47; 93; 97; 99 and Thanksgiving Songs of Israel (Danklieder Israels), Pss. 124 and 129.

Gunkel lists also hymns and hymn-like items to be found within the structure of the psalms of other genres and in other books of the Old Testament.¹⁵ Of these sections, we have included the following parts as communal hymns: Ps. 66:1-12 which is part of an Individual Thanksgiving Song: Ps. 89:6-19 which is part of a Liturgical and Compound Poem.

Gunkel includes from the Laments of the Individual (Klaglieder des Einzelnen) Ps. 77: 14-21 as a hymn-like item. We have designated it as a communal hymn-like unit noting with Westermann¹⁶ its epiphanic content.

We have also included the communal hymns from psalm genres listed by Gerstenberger¹⁷ which have not already been mentioned above: Ps. 78 from the Hymns of the Festival Cycle which we list as a Hymn of Praise; Ps. 132, a Zion Song which can also be listed as a Royal Psalm in keep with Mowinckel's classification¹⁸ and also

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Westermann, p.97.

¹⁷ Gerstenberger, p.78

¹⁸ Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962) I, 47.

according to the view that Psalm 132 represents the convergence of what G. von Rad designates as the David-Zion tradition.¹⁹

It is Mowinckel's opinion that Psalm 72 was used in worship as an intercession for the king.²⁰ We have included Ps. 72:1b-19 deleting the editorial verses of the redactor and regarding the remainder as a communal royal hymn. With Mowinckel²¹ and Gerstenberger²² we also classify Ps. 89:6-19 as a communal royal hymn.

The generic classification of the remaining hymns has support from a variety of scholars. Drijvers classifies Pss. 95 and 100 as Pilgrim and Processional Hymns.²³ We have included them as communal hymns in this category. With Gunkel we have placed Ps. 122 in the Zion Songs category but we have classified it also as a Pilgrim and Processional Hymn in company with Gerstenberger.²⁴ With Mowinckel²⁵ and Gerstenberger²⁶, we have included Pss. 96 and 98 as Enthronement Hymns. With Gerstenberger, we list Ps. 68 as a Victory Song.

¹⁹Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), II, 117.

²⁰Mowinckel, I, 49. ²¹Ibid. p.47.

²²Gerstenberger, p.216. ²³Drijvers, p.255.

²⁴Gerstenberger, p.211. ²⁵Mowinckel, I, 106.

²⁶Gerstenberger, p.214. ²⁷Ibid. p.209.

In summary, we will use the following communal hymnic psalms classified according to their genre. There is some overlap of categories.

1. General Hymns of Praise:

Pss. 8; 19; 29; 33; 65; 66:1-12; 67; 77:14-21; 78; 104; 105; 113; 114; 135; 136; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150.

2. Victory Song:

Ps. 68.

3. Thanksgiving Songs:

Pss. 124; 129.

4. Zion Songs:

Pss. 46; 48; 76; 87; 122; 132.

5. Pilgrim and Processional Hymns:

Pss. 95; 100; 122.

6. Communal Royal Hymns;

Pss. 72:1b-19; 89:6-19; 132.

7. Enthronement Hymns:

Pss. 47; 93; 96; 97; 98; 99.

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS I

MODES OF INDEPENDENCE OF PROTOLOGY AND SOCIETAL ETHOS

A. Modes in Protology1. Creation and sustenance independent: sustenance alone.a. Frequency

Frequency as a mode of independence may be regarded as a quantitative measure of the motifs that we are considering. In order to assess this measure it would appear that what is needed is a statement of the percentage per bicola or tricola of the motif words connoting protology and societal ethos.

But there are several problems to be faced with such a method. One of them is the variability with which a phoneme, morpheme, word, phrase, clause, exclamation, sentence, tricola, bicola, cola or theme is the unit which carries the weight of meaning of the motif with which we are dealing. Thus to make a count of the number of various nouns and verbs which represent the sustenance motif and to obtain a percentage per bicola for the sake of comparison would be rather misleading.

Another problem with such a mathematical procedure is that it would not take into account qualitative estimations of the motifs with which we are dealing. One such qualitative factor would be the relative weight of importance in the intentionality of the author or in the estimation of the interpreter attached to a theme carrying the meaning of a motif in comparison with a smaller verbal unit carrying that thought. Another factor would be the enhancement which the author works into the composition of the text by the use of similes, metaphors, word pairs and various kinds of parallelism and which throws light on the significance for the author of the motifs being portrayed.

It is not our purpose to go into the analysis in such minute detail. Thus one way around the problems of measurement that we have mentioned is to take a holistic impression of each psalm in turn, taking into account both the quantitative and qualitative aspects and to make a statement in terms of comparison.

With such an approach in mind and considering Pss. 29; 46; 47; 48; 66:1-12; 67; 76; 77:14-21; 87; 93; 98; 113; 114; 129 and 135, we can conclude that the psalms in which the sustenance motifs are most frequent are Pss. 29; 46; 47; 66:1-12; 77:14-21; 93 and 114.

b. Generic distribution.

Having already made a decision as to what classification into which the communal hymnic psalms fall according to their genre, it now remains to indicate any trends as to how the motifs are distributed.

We note first when considering all of the psalms in this section that seven of them are Psalms of Praise (Pss. 29; 66:1-12; 67; 77:14-21; 113; 114 and 135), four are Songs of Zion (Pss. 46; 48; 76 and 87), one is a Song of Thanksgiving (Ps. 129) and three are Enthronement Psalms (Pss. 47; 93 and 98). From these observations we can conclude that the hymns in this section are well distributed across generic lines.

Again we note that of these hymns, the ones in which the sustenance motifs occur most consist of four Psalms of Praise (Pss. 29; 66:1-12; 77:14-21 and 114), one Song of Zion (Ps. 46) and two Enthronement Psalms (Pss. 47 and 93). From these observations we can conclude that the motif of sustenance is well distributed across generic lines. It may be noted that in these three generic categories, the element of praise is very common and that the praise is frequently made concerning God's sustaining activities.

2. Creation and sustenance interdependent

a. Frequency

Taking into account both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the creation and sustenance motifs in this section we observe that the frequency of creation motifs is generally low in comparison with the frequency of the sustenance motifs. We note also that the frequency of the sustenance motifs is particularly high in Pss. 65; 89:6-19; 96 and 124.

b. Loci of dominance

We may make some preliminary remarks on the observations of Gerhard von Rad concerning the doctrines of creation and redemption in Deutero-Isaiah. He observes that:

at no point in the whole of Second Isaiah does the doctrine of creation appear in its own right; it never forms the main theme of a pronouncement, nor provides the motive of a prophetic utteranceit¹ performs only an ancillary function

Such observations lead us to question whether in the psalms the doctrine of creation also performs an ancillary function. First we note that our enquiry follows slightly different lines from that of von Rad. Whereas Gerhard von

¹Gerhard von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), p. 134.

Rad was contrasting the doctrines of protology and soteriology,² we are contrasting in this section the motifs of creation and sustenance. With these considerations in mind, we ask whether in the communal hymnic psalms the motif of creation ever occurs as a dominant motif.

We look to see where, if anywhere, the creation motif appears in its own right, in a dominant locus in a main clause, or in an ancillary locus in apposition to the main thought or in such locus in a subordinate clause.

In fact there are a few examples of creation in a dominant locus. In Psalm 19 the words, *ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרכיע*, (*the firmament proclaims the work of his hands*, v.2) stand in their own right. Such is also the case for the words, *הוא עשנו* (*It is he who made us.*, Ps. 100:3).

In Ps. 89:6-19, the words *תבל ומלאה אתה יסדתם* (*the world and all that is in it, you have founded them* ..v.12b) do not form a dominant thought, yet the creation motif that they constitute stands in its own right and is not ancillary to the surrounding context.

Over all, in this group of psalms, the sustenance motifs are numerically so dominant that it would be too laborious a task to describe all the examples. It will be sufficient to point to those examples where in the same cola or passage the creation and sustenance motifs occur in close proximity.

²Ibid., p.132.

In Psalm 65, the words, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ (*O God of our salvation!*, v.6) dominate the ancillary creation motif that is constituted by the words, מִכֵּין הָרִים בְּכֹחוֹ (*who by your strength established the mountains.*, v.7).

In Psalm 124, the words, עֲזָרָנוּ בִשְׁם יְהוָה (*our help is in the name of Yahweh.*, v.8a) express a sustenance motif that dominates the following creation motif which consists of a clause in apposition to the name 'Yahweh':

עָשָׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ (*who made the heavens and the earth.*, v.8b).

In Psalm 136, verses 4-9 are rich in creation motifs and stand in their own right, but not in isolation. They precede the dominating sustenance theme in verses 10-26 which build up to a climax which expresses praise to God for his redemptive acts.

c. Generic distribution

In this section, four hymns out of the eight psalms that are listed are hymns of praise (Pss. 19; 65; 136 and 150). The rest consists of an enthronement hymn (Ps. 96), a pilgrim hymn (Ps. 100), a thanksgiving hymn (Ps. 124) and a communal royal hymn (Ps. 89:6-19). Thus the hymns are well distributed across generic lines.

In addition, each of the hymns in which the frequency of sustenance motifs is greatest (viz. Pss. 65; 89:6-19; 96 and 124) are all generically different. The hymns in this section where the creation motif occurs more

frequently (Pss. 89:6-19; 96; 124 and 136) are also generically different from one another.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, where the creation and sustenance motifs are independent, they are also independent of genre classification.

Where the creation and sustenance motifs are interdependent, they are also independent of genre classification. Thus it is clear that these motifs in themselves do not constitute a genre. They represent convictional beliefs and doctrines about God's creation and sustenance and are to be found among a variety of genres and therefore probably originate from a variety of settings.

The fact that in general the sustenance motifs dominate over the creation motifs suggests that, in the process of composition of the communal hymnic psalms, the sustenance themes were in most cases the original themes and that the creation themes and motifs were worked into the compositions at a later stage.

B. Modes in Societal Ethos: Justice and Sustainability Interdependent

1. Frequency

Taking into account both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of justice and sustainability in this

section, we observe that in Psalm 122, the only psalm that falls into this category, that there is no significant difference in the frequency of the justice and sustainability motifs.

2. Loci of dominance

In this psalm, the expression of sentiment of thanksgiving that a Davidic rule for judgement is set up in Jerusalem (v.5)³ sets the frame of mind for praying for the peace of Jerusalem (vv. 6,7 and 8). Thus the motif of justice represented by the word, מִשְׁפָּט (*judgement*) stands in prominence compared with the sustainability motif of שְׁלֹמֹ (peace).

3. Generic distribution

At least one thing can be said about the genre of the interdependence of societal justice and sustainability. It is to be found in a communal hymnic psalm classified as a Zion Song.

C. Mode of Tradition History in Protology and Societal Ethos

The mode of tradition history (Traditionsgeschichte) may apply to the history of the formation of the tradition

³ Here we translate the present tense for the imperfect שְׁלֹמֹ.

which we find deposited concerning protology and societal ethos. One is to be reminded that here we are considering the circumstances where protology and societal ethos occur in independence in separate psalms and that we are dealing with the question of the historical relationship that exists in protology between creation and sustenance on the one hand, and the question of a similar relationship that exists in societal ethos between justice and sustainability on the other hand.

As has been shown, the evidence points to the earlier existence of the sustenance motifs. Thus it was, in the experience of Israel, that the starting point for her reflection on God's creative activity was her theological reflection on her own origins as a people who were delivered from Egypt and sustained by God's providential care.

This conclusion is substantiated in Gerhard von Rad's essay, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation, 1936".⁴

It also correlates with the observation of Artur Weiser that the praise of Yahweh as the creator does not occur in the hymns to the same extent as the saving deeds of Yahweh and that the idea of creation was borrowed from

⁴Gerhad von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation, 1936" in his "The Problem of the Hexateuch..." pp.131-143.

the nature religions of the Near East and only subsequently grafted upon the tradition of the Yahweh cult.⁵

We will not be dealing here with the question of the origin of Israel's ideas of creation and the extent to which they were either borrowed or realized in self discovery, but we can be certain that they were preceded in time by a tradition of Heilsgeschichte that had passed through oral and written stages of development before they were grafted onto that tradition.

We do not have sufficient evidence from a single psalm to come to any definite conclusion concerning the historical relationship in societal ethos that existed between the traditions involving the themes of justice and sustainability. However Psalm 122 points in the direction of a conclusion that, historically speaking, the belief in human justice may have been more paramount in Israel's traditions than her belief in her sustainability of the natural and social order.

D. The Mode of the Setting of Protology and Societal Ethos

The setting of either protology or societal ethos in the communal hymnic psalms refers to the Sitz im Leben of

⁵ Artur Weiser, The Psalms. A Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p.60.

the independence of protology and societal ethos.

One observation is that such a setting is communal as far as the communal hymnic psalms are concerned. This observation does not rule out the possibility that at some stage of the tradition history of these psalms, some of them may have originated in an individual setting and were later modified for public worship.

The next step is to determine which of the possible communal settings are involved. One tendency in scholarship is to jump to the conclusion that public worship was the communal setting. Arvid Kapelrud, for example, sees the traditions of God's dealings with Israel as having been transmitted via the Israelite cult and as having received their form in the cult.⁶ But other settings have also to be considered: the societal institutions of Kingship, of the Gate and of the Sages.

In addition a psalm could have existed at any one time or over a period of time from its origin to its latest development, orally and in written form, in a number of different settings. For this reason it is misleading to speak, as Erhard Gerstenberger does, of "*hymns of the*

⁶ Arvid Kapelrud, "Tradition and Worship: The Role of the Cult in Tradition Formation and Transmission" in Douglas A. Knight (ed.) Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p.102.

festival cycle",⁷ which is to tie the genre to the particular setting of festival, whereas such hymns possibly existed in a variety of settings in addition to that of the festival. At least we may concede with Gerstenberger that knowledge of these different festive occasions in Israel is hard to attain⁸ and concur with him that the genre of 'hymn' can be related to a variety of appropriate life situations.⁹

The implication of such a view is that any one hymn may have had more than one appropriate setting in life, be it a wedding, dedication, victory in battle, harvest time or seasonal feast.

Again, within any one hymn, we can have reflected a variety of institutional settings, particularly where the hymn is composite. We will take Psalm 19 as an example. Psalm 19A (vv.1-7) presents a theme which may have had its background setting in a harvest festival, while Psalm 19B (vv.8-15), a section which was added later with its praise of תּוֹרַת יְהוָה (*Torah of Yahweh*) is apparently from a different setting.

⁷ Erhard Gerstenberger, "Psalms", in John H. Hayes (ed.) Old Testament Criticism (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), p. 212.

⁸ Ibid., p. 208.

⁹ Ibid., p. 208.

While the hymn reflects at least two different settings, each section shows the influence of the sages, even though the hymn is not of Wisdom genre. We have already mentioned the theme of Torah of Yahweh in the second section. The first section also bears a wisdom theme, viz., 'the world having a message'. The heavens declare (מספרים v.2) and the firmament proclaims (מעשה). Each day speaks to the next day (יום ליום יביע אמר) and each night declares knowledge to the next night (ולילה ללילה ירוה דעת) (v.3).

The redactor of these two sections, who was possibly one of the sages, probably used the presence of the two wisdom themes as his rationale for combining two psalms of different genre and setting. We end up with a mixed genre and a variety of possible settings that are either identical with or different from the original settings. Here the genre is apparently not tied to one particular setting.

Such a view rests on the assumption that the coherence between genre and setting can no longer be dogmatically upheld. It concurs with the claim of Rolf Knierim that in order to design a method to do justice to the nature of all texts,

*the relationship between genre and setting must remain an open one, so that both can be related to, or kept independent of one another as the text may require.*¹⁰

¹⁰Rolf Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered", Interpretation, XXVII (1973), 449.

The texts for which we are contemplating appropriate settings do not necessarily consist of a complete psalm but rather a scheme of thought reflected in the appearance of motifs that are related to one another. In one of such relationships, protology and societal ethos occur independently.

With regard to this relationship, we may ask, "In what settings does the scheme of coherence of creation and sustenance occur?" and, "In what settings does the coherence of justice and sustainability occur?"

As we have shown, these coherences are independent of any one particular genre. We are not therefore required to determine the hymn setting or settings to answer the above questions. Cue-words may indicate the societal institution that has either provided the setting of the text or which has been responsible for the origin of that segment of text.

When we examine the protology where sustenance occurs alone we have several cues that point to a setting. For example, in the enthronement psalm, Psalm 47, the words *עלה אלהים* (*God has gone up*, v.6) suggest a ritual act within the cult where the ark, representing the throne of Yahweh, is carried in procession to Jerusalem thereby celebrating the sustenance of Yahweh's rule.¹¹

¹¹Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), I, 115.

In Psalm 67, the words *ארץ נתנה יבולה* (*the earth has yielded its increase*, v.7) suggest the setting of a harvest festival for celebrating Yahweh's sustaining activity.

Again in Psalm 113, the words, *מאשפת ירים אביון* (*he lifts the needy from the ash heap*, v.7b) suggest the setting of 'justice in the gate'.

When we examine the protology in which creation and sustenance cohere, we also find cues for the setting. For example, in Psalm 65, the words, *מכין הרים* (*who established the mountains*, v.7) and the words, *ברביבים תמגגנה* (*you soften it [the earth] with spring rains*,¹² v.11) collectively express the coherence of the creation and sustenance motifs. The latter text also suggests that the setting for this coherence is a harvest festival held in Spring.

In Psalm 89:6-19, the words, *אתה דכאת כחלל רהב* (*You crushed Rahab like a carcass*, v.11) and the words *צדק ומשפט מכון כסאך* (*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne*, v.15) collectively express the coherence of creation and sustenance. A text which follows, viz., *אשרי העם יודעי תרועה* (*Blessed are the people who know the festal shout*, v.16) suggests the setting for the

¹²Luis Stadelmann, The Hebrew Conception of the World (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970), p.116.

coherence as a festal occasion within the cult.

Mention has been made before of the coherence of the motifs of justice and sustainability in Psalm 122. The words *בֵּית יְהוָה נֵלֵךְ* (*Let us go to the house of Yahweh*, v.1c) indicate that this coherence had its setting within the temple cult in Jerusalem.

Much more could be said about the setting of the above coherences making attempts to differentiate between variations in their settings according to different stages in their tradition history and different time periods, deducing more details of those occasions, places and times from considerations of the probable genre, scheme, structure and content of the text and from the mood, function, occupation of mind and intention of the author, collector or redactor.

However, as much of such detail is inaccessible, we will spend no further effort in this section theorizing about possible settings. Such theorizing would involve us in an evaluation of such controversial settings as the Enthronement Festival postulated by Sigmund Mowinckel¹³; the Covenant Renewal Festival advocated by Gerhard von Rad¹⁴ and Artur Weiser¹⁵ and the Royal Zion Festival

¹³Mowinckel, I, 106f.

¹⁴Gerhard von Rad, "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch" in his The Problem of the Hexateuch..., pp.20-24.

¹⁵Weiser, pp.35f.

advanced by Hans-Joachim Kraus¹⁶ and Keith Crim¹⁷.

In addition one would have to consider more recent research on Societal Institutions and their appropriate settings. It does not serve our purpose to pursue such a matter any further in this chapter.

¹⁶Hans-Joachim Kraus, Worship in Israel. A Cultic History of the Old Testament (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp.209f.

¹⁷K.R. Crim, The Royal Psalms (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1962), pp.44-51.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS II

MODES OF INTERDEPENDENCE OF PROTOLOGY AND SOCIETAL ETHOS

In Chapter TWO, our purpose was to analyze the relationship of coherence within each of protology and societal ethos. In this chapter our purpose is to analyze the relationships of coherence between protology and societal ethos.

A. Modes in the Total Spectrum of Protology and Societal Ethos

1. Frequency

As in Chapter TWO, we will limit the analysis here to a general impression of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the frequency of the motifs and their coherences.

Such an impression of Pss. 78; 104 and 105 reveals that, except for Psalm 104, the frequency of the creation motif is small. In all of these psalms the frequency of the justice and sustainability motifs is quite small, while the frequency of the sustenance motifs is quite high. The creation motif is quite frequently expressed in Psalm 104.

2. Loci of dominance

It follows from what has been said that sustenance is the dominating motif in these psalms. We will make

some observations of this dominance in the loci where the dominating motif coheres with the other motifs.

In Psalm 78, verses 67-69 express the sustaining activity of God's election of Judah, Zion and the temple. God built the temple like the earth. Then follows a clause in ancillary locus qualifying the earth: *יִסְדָּהּ לְעוֹלָם* (*which he founded forever*, v. 69b) which expresses the motif of creation.

In Psalm 104, in the coherence of creation with the other motifs, creation stands in its own right. But in a complementary manner so also does sustenance.

In verses 2-9 we have a section using the present and perfect tenses to express God's creation and ordering of the earth: *He stretched out (וַיִּטֶּן) the heavens like a tent (v.2). He set (יָדָה) the earth on its foundations (v.5).*

Then follows, in coherence with the creation theme, sustenance language in which God cares for the drinking water and dwellings for animals (vv. 10-18). The participial form is used to express God's sustaining action: *He waters (וַיִּשְׁקֶה) the mountains (v.13). The grass he causes to grow (וַיַּצְמִיחַ v.14).* Here the sustenance theme stands in its own right, but is subordinated to the creation theme in that it is mentioned secondly.

The next segment in which God regulates the sun and the moon (vv.19-23) begins with the creation motif in the perfect tense: *He made (וַיַּעַשׂ) the moon to mark the seasons.*

Here creation is the dominating note while the sustaining actions of the sun rising (v.22), lions seeking food (v.21) and humanity working (v.23) are placed in ancillary locus.

The theme of God creating the sea and its creatures (vv.24-26) is accentuated with the sage's interpretive comment, כָּלֶם בַּחֲכָמָה עָשִׂיתָ (*In wisdom you have made them all*, v.24b). This action includes even the making of the sea serpent, Leviathan (לִיָּתָן v.26).

Structurally placed in locus ancillary to this creation theme, stands a sustenance unit making the point that all the living creatures depend on God. By God's sustaining breath, they are created¹ (בְּרֵאֵן v.30), which is to say that the various species are perpetuated.

In Psalm 104, societal ethos is also placed in ancillary locus. Humanity's cultivation of the plants is ancillary to God causing them to grow (v.14). Ancillary also is the production of food, wine, oil and bread (vv. 14, 15). Thus human sustainability is ancillary to and dependent upon God's sustenance.

Human ability to work is ancillary to and dependent upon God causing the sun to rise (v.22). When the sun sets, human labor ceases (v.23).

Human sustainability, evidenced in the sailing of ships (v.26) is ancillary to and dependent upon God's

¹Note the use of the imperfect tense here.

creation of the sea (v.24). Human activity is placed in the locus of dependence due to the fact that human beings are among God's many creatures: מַה־רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה (*How many are your creatures, O Yahweh!*, v.24).

The motif of justice in this psalm is embedded in a concluding exhortation of praise and thus it is placed in ancillary locus compared with the main body of the psalm. This motif of justice takes the form of punishment of sinners (v.35) and is probably a wisdom reference.

In Psalm 105, the dominating motif is that of God's sustenance which reaches its climax in the recitation of Heilsgeschichte concerning the Exodus (vv.26-42).

Compared with the bulk of this psalm, the creation theme plays a minor role and is embedded in a concept of protology, viz. 'his mighty works' (וּפְלִאוֹתָיו vv.2,5) which incorporates both of God's creative and sustaining acts.

The sustainability motif in the concept of the human role in the covenant (vv.8-11) is overshadowed by God's role in the covenant. The human role is also ancillary to the sustenance of God's judgements (מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ, v.7). The part of the covenant entered into by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (vv. 9,10) is in response to and subordinated to God's initiation of that covenant (v.8).

Moses and Aaron demonstrated sustainability by working signs and miracles (v.27), but this action is

subsidiary to God having chosen and sent Moses and Aaron in the first place (v.26).

Again, the justice motif is expressed as a clause of purpose modifying the statement which tells of God giving his people the lands of the nations. The purpose is that the people should keep his statutes (לִקְוֹ) and observe his laws (לְוַלְלָתוֹ, v.45). Here the justice motif is in ancillary locus.

3. Generic distribution

Our brief observation on the generic distribution of these psalms and upon the total spectrum of protology and societal ethos that is in them is that the total spectrum is to be found in the communal hymns of praise.

B. Modes in the Interdependence of Protology and Societal Ethos Partially Expressed

1. Protology as sustenance and societal ethos as justice and sustainability.

a. Frequency

Consideration of Psalm 72:1b-19 and Psalm 132 shows that Psalm 72:1b-19 is well supplied with sustenance, justice and sustainability motifs whereas Psalm 132 is well supplied with sustenance and sustainability motifs and poorly supplied with justice motifs.

b. Loci of dominance

As far as the frequency is concerned, the predominate motif appears to be that of justice. But Psalm 72:1b-19 begins with the theme of sustenance and proceeds to petition God to bestow upon the Israelite king the attributes of righteousness and justice, the test of which will be his ability to give justice to the poor, the needy and the oppressed (vv.2-4). Here the motif of justice stands in its own right, but the societal ethos represented by it is dependent upon God providing it. This potential providence is implied in the prayer of the opening verse: *אלהים משפטיו למלך חן* (*Give the king your justice, O God!*). Thus it is the sustenance implied in God providing justice which predominates.

There is also a petition that the king's rule may long endure (vv.5,8) which represents a motif of sustainability involving effort on the part of the king and the institution of kingship. But the very nature of the petition suggests that such perpetuation of the Davidic dynasty is dependent upon God's will to sustain it. Therefore this motif of sustainability on the part of the king stands in ancillary locus in relation to God's sustenance.

Only in verses 12-14 does the justice motif dominate. Here the words expressing societal ethos can be

translated into the present tense: *לַיֵּצֵל* (*he delivers*, v.12), *דָּן* (*he has pity*, v.13) and *לִגְאֹל* (*he redeems*, v.14).

After these verses, the psalm reverts to the mode of petition concerning the sustainability of the king, viz., the perpetuation of the king's rule (vv. 15,17) and the plentiful provision of grain (*פֶּסֶם־לֶבֶן*, v.16) and fruit (*פִּרְיָו*). This motif of sustainability stands in subordination to the motif of God's sustenance in verse 1.

In Psalm 132, the idea of the king's son keeping the covenant, thereby sustaining the dynasty, is a condition which God requires before he will grant the perpetuation of the dynasty (v.12). Thus in this context, societal sustainability is subordinate to God's sustenance. Likewise the motif of justice embodied in the condition of keeping God's testimonies (*יְהִי־עֵד* v.12) is also located ancillary to protological sustenance.

At the conclusion of this psalm, sustenance is the dominating motif, taking the form of God's promise to David to perpetuate his line (v.17).

c. Generic distribution

It is not a chance occurrence that Psalms 72:1b-19 and 132 are found together in this section, for they both belong to the genre of the communal royal psalm. The main difference between these two psalms is the greater emphasis on justice in Psalm 72:1b-19. Nevertheless, the

justice notion in the condition of keeping God's testimonies, even with its brevity, plays a vital role in Psalm 132.

2. Protology as sustenance and societal ethos as justice

a. Frequency

As we compare Psalms 68; 97; 99 and 147, we find in each psalm a far greater frequency of the sustenance motif. In Pss. 68 and 147 in particular the justice motif plays quite a minor role.

b. Loci of dominance

In Psalm 68, the justice notion is embedded in an introductory invitation to praise. The words וְצַדִּיקִים יִשְׂמְחוּ (But let the righteous be joyful, v.4) stand as an introduction to the body of the psalm and, being probably of later authorship, are ancillary to the sustenance theme.

In Psalm 97, verses 10-12 bear signs of later authorship and thus the justice motifs in it play a subordinate role. The words אֹהֲבֵי יְהוָה שָׂנְאוּ רָע (The lovers of Yahweh hate evil, v.10) and שִׂמְחוּ צַדִּיקִים בַּיהוָה (Rejoice in Yahweh, O righteous ones, v.12) are like signatures of a redactor making his after-thought to the theme of Yahweh's kingship.

In Psalm 99, we have God speaking to Moses and Aaron in a pillar of cloud (v.7a) The response of the two leaders is put in an ancillary position: שִׁמְרוּ עֲדָתָיו וְחֻק נֹתֵן לָמוֹ (They kept his testimonies and statutes that he gave them, v.7b.)

Not only is this justice motif in ancillary locus in verse 7, but the whole unit (vv.6-9) appears to be of separate origin to that of verses 1-5 and is a commentary upon the thought there of God, as kingly lover of justice (מִשְׁפָּט אֱהָב) initiating equity (מִיִּשְׁרָיִם v.4) and righteousness (צְדָקָה v.4).

In Psalm 147, the societal ethos is expressed negatively and is in ancillary position at the conclusion of the psalm: וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים בֹּלִי־יָדְעוּם (they do not know his ordinances). This thought is in sharp contrast with God's sustaining activity of lifting the downtrodden (עֲלִוִּיִּם, v.6), covering (הַמַּכְסֶּה) the heavens with clouds, giving the beasts their food (לַחֲמָה) making peace (שָׁלוֹם, v.14) and providing snow, ice and wind (vv. 16-18).

c. Generic distribution

Psalm 68 is a Victory Song, Psalms 97 and 99 are Enthronement Psalms and Psalm 147 is a Psalm of Praise. Thus the coherence of protology as sustenance and societal ethos as justice is well distributed across generic lines.

3. Protology as creation and sustenance and societal ethos as justice

a. Frequency

An examination of Psalms 33; 95; 146; 148 and 149 shows that the frequency of the sustenance motif is particularly high in Psalms 33 and 146, that the creation motifs are plentiful in Psalm 146 and that the justice motifs occur much less frequently.

b. Loci of dominance

In Psalm 33, the motifs of creation and sustenance stand in their own right. They cohere well together. By his word, God brought about the creation of the heavens (וַיִּבְרָא יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, v.6) and provided storehouses (מִצְנוֹת, v.7) for the firmament waters (תְּהוֹמוֹת). By the same word God acts in history and in carrying forth his sustaining purposes for Israel, he annuls (הִפְסִיךְ) the council of the nations (v.10).

Both of these creation and sustenance motifs are governed by the preceding statement, אֱהוֹב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (He loves righteousness and justice, v.5a). The motif of sustenance that this statement contains is signaled by the present tense.

The thought of God's sustaining purpose is carried through to the end of the psalm. God desires that the

righteous be preserved from death and kept alive during famine (v.19).

The motif of justice in the praise of the righteous (וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, v.1) is embedded in an exhortation to praise. Compared with the motifs with which it coheres, it plays a minor role.

In Psalm 95, sustenance of the earth and sea (v.4) and the creation of land and sea (v.5) cohere well, neither motif dominating. Both themes are reasons for worshipping Yahweh, our Maker (וְיֵשׁוּעַ, v.6). His forming (וְיִצְרָא) of the dry land (v.5) is a prelude to his creation of humanity.

The justice motif is in ancillary position at the end of the psalm. It conveys the thought that the people of Israel did not give regard to God's ways (וְלֹא יָדְעוּ, v.10b).

The dominant motif in Psalm 146 is that of sustenance. God's justice is directed toward the oppressed, the hungry, the prisoner (v.7), the blind, those bowed down (v.8), the stranger, the widow and the orphan (v.9). The creation motif is expressed in an ancillary adjectival clause qualifying God (v.6).

The justice motif is not placed in a main clause. It expressed judgement on the wicked (וְיִשְׁפֹּט, v.9).

In Psalm 148, the creation motif is dominant. In verses 1-6, the heavens are called upon to praise Yahweh. In verses 7-14, the earth and its contents are called upon to praise Yahweh.

The sustenance motif is expressed in the words: חק־נתן ולא יעבור (*a statute he gave, which they do not transgress*, v.6b). This motif is ancillary to the notion of Yahweh establishing the heavens (vv.3-6a).

In Psalm 149, the word בַּעֲשֵׂיוֹ (*in his Maker*) signalizes creation and בַּמֶּלֶכֶם (*in their king*) signalizes sustenance. These words form a word pair and neither is dominating over the other. Together they set the mood and occasion for celebration.

The justice motif is ancillary to the theme of celebration and calls for judgement upon the nations, their kings, nobles and peoples (vv. 6b-9).

c. Generic distribution

All these psalms are communal hymns of praise except Psalm 95 which is a communal royal psalm. The dominance of sustenance or creation is not related to any one particular genre. In the communal hymns of praise we have the occurrence of sustenance in some cases dominating and of creation in other situations dominating.

4. Protology as creation and sustenance and societal ethos as sustainability

a. Frequency

In Psalm 8, the creation, sustenance and sustainability motifs are all well represented. The sustainability motifs are noticeably greater in frequency.

b. Loci of dominance

The first occurring motif is one of sustenance. God is celebrated for having founded a bulwark: *וַיִּנְקִים יְסֹדָה עַז לַמֶּעַן צוֹרְרֶיךָ* (*you have founded a bulwark because of your foes*, v.3).

Then we have the motif of creation dealing with the heavens, the moon and the stars (v.4). The motif of sustenance comes next with God caring for humanity (v.5), followed by the creation idea of God having given humanity an honored place. The rest of the psalm is rich with the motif of sustainability where humanity is given the responsibility of ruling over God's creatures. The word *תַּחְשִׁילָהוּ* (*You have caused him to rule*, v.7) implies the human caring for the creatures rather than a dominance over them.²

The protology of verses 3-5 sets the stage for the human efforts of sustainability. Human beings are able to rule and to sustain the created world only because God, by his sustaining and creative activity, has enabled them to do so. The societal ethos derives its power from protology.

c. Generic distribution

The coherence of protology and sustainability is to be found in the genre of the communal hymn of praise.

² Gerhard Losowsky, Konkordanz zum hebräischen alten Testament (Stuttgart: Württembergische Biblanstalt, 1958), p. 874.

C. The Mode of Tradition History

We have already noted that in Psalms 78 and 105 the dominating motif is sustenance, whereas in Psalm 104, the dominating motif is creation.

Claus Westermann has observed that Psalms 78 and 105 belong together in their traditio-historical development.³ He sees the praise of God as the lord of history developing from the praise of the majesty of God.⁴

But our analysis suggests that the development took place in the reverse direction and that the original theme was that of God's sustaining activity. The themes of creation and societal ethos were probably worked in later by redactors.

If this be the case, one may question why it is that in Psalm 104 creation is the dominating motif. This could be answered by showing that Psalm 104 was dependent upon the structure of the ancient Egyptian hymn to the sun composed by King Ikhnaton⁵ and that the Hebrew composer used this framework for his own composition. But one cannot demonstrate this dependence with any degree of certitude

³Claus Westermann, The Praise of God in the Psalms (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1961), pp. 140, 141.

⁴Ibid., p. 140.

⁵composed by Pharoah Amenophis IV (1375-1358 B.C.).

except to indicate the affinities between Psalm 104 and this Egyptian hymn.⁶

We have seen that for Psalms 72: 1b-19 and 132, the royal ideology features God's sustenance as the dominating theme. But both psalms appear in each case to possess a sense of unity and apart from Ps. 72:1a and 20 it is difficult to point to any stage of internal tradition-historical development.

Psalm 132 probably reflects a time well after David when the David and Zion traditions had become merged. The author of Psalm 132 may have possessed an Ur-text of Psalm 72 (perhaps vv. 1b-19) originating from a period before the formation of the David-Zion tradition and in his own psalm reflected upon the kind of Davidic rule he wished to see perpetuated.

One may speculate whether the same author was responsible for the words of Psalm 72:1a and 20, mistakenly attributing verses 1b-19 to Solomon. Another possibility is that the word *שלמה* (*of Solomon*) derives from the writing of the Septuagint.⁷

We have noted that the sustenance motif dominates in Psalms 68; 97; 99 and 147. It may well be that the sections in which this motif occurs each existed earlier than the compositions in which they are now found. Such Ur-texts

⁶Artur Weiser, The Psalms. A Commentary.
(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 666.

⁷Ibid., p.502.

may well have been Pss. 68:5-35; 97:1-9; 99:1-5 and 147:1-19.

If this be the case, the later additions would have been Pss. 68:1-4; 97:10-12; 99:6-9 and 147:20. In these additions the motif of justice was added. Such activity may have been the work of sages or persons representing the institution of kingship.

Psalms 33; 95; 146 and 149 are plentiful in sustenance motifs and Psalm 148 is abundant with creation motifs. In each case the role of justice is minimal. There is no fixed pattern as to the locus of this motif. In Ps. 33 it occurs at the beginning and in Pss. 95; 146; 148 and 149 at the end. This may reflect more the style of the authors rather than the work of redactors.

Last, Psalm 8 bears the marks of structural unity and shows no evidence of a development of tradition history in the text.

D. The Mode of Setting

As in Chapter TWO, we are concerned here with the settings or institutional backgrounds of the motifs in their inter-relationships rather than with the settings of each psalm. We are also working with the presupposition that the genre is not tied to one particular setting and that a variety of institutional settings may be reflected in any one psalm.

In the psalms with the total spectrum of protology

and societal ethos, we find that the coherence of the motifs correlates with wisdom influences.

This is not to suggest that these psalms were Wisdom Psalms, but to indicate that the institution of the Sages is reflected in these wisdom influences.

For example, in Psalm 104, the sage has made the interpretive comment about God's creatures: כֹּלֶם בַּחֲכָמָה עָשִׂיתָ (In wisdom you have made them all, v.24). In addition we find wisdom thought in the didactic teaching of cause and effect. For example, the rocks are a refuge for badgers (v.18).

Wisdom influence shows itself also in the concern for the stability of the earth. The foundations should never be shaken (לֹא-תִהְיֶה לָרָעָה, v.5b). Again, wisdom is concerned about the punishment of sinners (v.35).

In Psalm 78, we detect a wisdom interest in Israel's history and the teaching of the law. The law is to be taught to the next generation (vv. 5-8). In Psalm 105, the didactic purpose is to remember Israel's history (v.5). Roland Murphy⁸ and Sigmund Mowinckel⁹ have noted the wisdom influence in these two psalms.

⁸ Roland E. Murphy, "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalm'", in Congress Volume, Bonn, 1962 (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 164, 167.

⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom" in Wisdom in Israel in the Ancient Near East (Leiden: Brill, 1969), p. 213.

We will now make some general comments about the psalms where the interdependence of protology and societal ethos is partial.

Psalms 72:1b-19; 132; 95; 97 and 99 reflect the background institution of kingship. The first two deal with the royal court while the latter three have some connection with either a festival setting or festive settings in which the kingship of Yahweh is celebrated.

The coherence of protology and societal ethos is appropriate for such settings. According to the royal Davidic ideology, God's kingly rule involved the sustenance of the world order both in its cosmic dimensions as well as in the societal realm through the institution of kingship.

God's rule of justice and righteousness was to be made effective through the rule of the Davidic king with whom he had entered into a covenant. This ideal rule was never fully realized in Old Testament times, yet it became the motivation for the hope in Israel for the perpetuation of the Davidic line.

The hymns, Pss. 8; 33; 146; 147; 148 and 149 all have liturgical elements of praise: Pss. 8:2, 10; 33:1-3; 146:1-2, 10; 147:1,20b; 148:1-13 and 149:1-3, 9b. These liturgical elements are clear signs of the use of the psalms in the cult. There is a reference to singing and the use of instruments, reflecting the temple worship in Jerusalem.

The setting for the coherences in Psalm 68 was

probably an occasion either before or after battle, anticipating or celebrating a victory.

Psalms 68; 97; 99 and 147 possibly had a number of different settings according to the traditio-historical stages through which they passed. The later additions with the justice motif possibly reflect a wisdom influence.

Other evidence of Wisdom influence is to be found in the notion of 'the world having a message'. Reference has already been made to Psalm 19:2. In addition we have this notion in two psalms in this section. In Psalm 97 we are told that '*the heavens proclaim God's righteousness*' (v.6). In the whole of Psalm 148 we have all creation summoned to praise God. This idea is reminiscent of birds, beasts, plants and fish making declarations in Job 12:7-9.¹⁰

Evidence of Priestly theological influence and of the background of the cult is clearly to be seen in Psalm 33. In coherence with the creation motif, the words *כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי הוּא - צוּה וַיַּעֲמֵד* (*For he spoke, and it came to pass; He commanded, and it stood fast; v.9*) express the priestly point of view.

The 'word of God' theology is also found in a passage which features the sustenance motif of God making peace: *הַשְׁלַח אֶמְרָתוֹ אֶרֶץ עֵד - מִהֲרָה יִרְוַץ דְּבָרוֹ* (*He sends forth*

¹⁰ Gerhard von Rad, Wisdom in Israel (London: SCM Press, 1972), p. 162.

his command to the earth. His word runs swiftly,
Ps. 147:15).¹¹

Finally, the theme of the orphan, widow and needy found in many of the psalms possibly reflects the institutional setting of the Gate in which clan elders and judges by their adjudication made legal provision for the needy. The institution of kingship was possibly also behind much of this societal ethos.

Herein is expressed concern for the orphan (Pss. 68:6; 146:9), the homeless (Ps. 68:7), the poor (72:12; 113:7; 132:15), the weak (Ps. 72:13), the needy (72:12; 68:11; 11:7), the widow (68:6; 146:9), the prisoner (68:7; 146:7), the stranger (114:1; 105:13;), the oppressed and hungry (146:7), the bowed down and blind (146:8), the traveller (146:9; 105:12), the broken hearted and the wounded (147:3) and the downtrodden (147:6).¹² These motifs concerning justice may also reflect interest from the settings of prophetic circles.

¹¹E.C. Rust, Nature and Man in Biblical Thought (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), p.129. cf. Ps. 147:18f.

¹²See Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965): 2Aqht. vv. 6-8, p. 248 and 127:45-47, p. 194 for a comparable concern in Ugaritic literature for the adjudication of the cases of the widow, orphan and oppressed.

A similar theme is found in the Akkadian literature. See 'Code of Hammurabi' in J.B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p.164.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WORLD VIEW REFLECTED IN THE TEXTS AND INSTITUTIONS

I. Protology

So far we have examined the coherences within and between protology and societal ethos, and have considered in part the possible societal institutions reflected in the coherences. We are now in a position to derive the world view or views that emerge from the cohering relationships. One of the first stages in conceptualizing such a view or views is to consider further what we can bring to light about protology.

We have expanded our concept of protology to include the activity of God in Heilsgeschichte. We have noted that protology has been compared with soteriology but that in Israelite thought, there was no hard line distinction between them.

We have also found that God's sustaining activity in the cosmos coheres with his sustaining action in Heilsgeschichte and that in Israelite thought there was not the distinction between God in nature and God in history that a modern philosopher would make.¹

¹Gerhard von Rad, "Some aspects of the Old Testament World View" in his The Problem of the Hexateuch (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966). p. 155.

Thus protology in the Israelite world view embodies the conception of God as Creator and Sustainer active in both nature and history.

According to this non-dualistic view, the world was not understood apart from God.² Yet it was distinct from God. The cosmic or pre-cosmic events were not conceived to be identical with God.³ Israel's world view was in opposition to the view of the nature religions which saw the world as emanating from the deity⁴ and which was characteristic of idolatry.

Nevertheless Israel's world view was in a continual state of flux resulting from her continual dialogue with Yahweh.⁵ This fact is corroborated by the traditional historical stages observed in the inter-relationship between protology and societal ethos.

Within protology, for example, we observe at least three different theological types of creation. We have noted the priestly creation type in Pss. 33 and 147 and the wisdom type in Pss. 8; 104; 148 and 19. There is a third type to be mentioned, viz., the conflict creation type found,

²Ibid., p. 152.

³Ibid., p. 149.

⁴Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), II, 339.

⁵Rad, "Some Aspects ...", p. 154.

for example, in Psalm 89:6-19.⁶ God has founded (בָּנָה) all the creatures in the world (v.12) including the mythical sea creature Rahab (רָהַב) whose destruction amounted to the creation of the world (v.11).⁷

This evidence of flux in Israel's understanding of creation and of her world view can be traced back to the ever-changing state of her own faith. This is so because her faith and world view interpenetrated one another.⁸

Israel's understanding of her world view was not only based on her faith in a Creator but was also part of her own history.⁹ This follows from the evidence we have observed that among the communal hymnic psalms the dominating motif, with few exceptions, was that of sustenance which included the creed-like recitation of Israel's saving history.

The primacy of sustenance and the secondary role of creation can be explained partly by the history of Israel's traditions. The institutions which developed in Israel

⁶This type of creation is also found in the Baal Cycle where Baal defeats Yamm with a club:
 ylm. ktp zbl ym. bn ydm. tp̄ nhr. (*It struck the shoulders of Prince Yamm, between the eyes of Judge River*). See C. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965), 68:16, p. 180.

We find the conflict type of creation also in Enuma Elish and in biblical sources such as Isaiah 51:9-14 + 3 and Job 40: 25f.

⁷Compare with the mythical creature, Leviathan, in Psalm 74:14; Job 40:25 and Isaiah 27:1.

⁸Rad, "Some Aspects ...", p. 145.

⁹Rad, Old Testament Theology, II, 338.

preserved first of all those traditions which explained her own existence. Thus we find preserved by the institutions of Israel, the Cult, the Gate, the Sages and Kingship an abundance of the motifs of Heilsgeschichte and celebration of God's establishment of an ordered rule for Israelite society.

The emphasis upon God's sustenance by these societal institutions reflects the Israelite pre-occupation with the sovereignty of God. The communal hymnic psalms evidence such a mind-set, particularly in the enthronement psalms.

God sits enthroned over the flood (Ps. 29:10). He is rider of the clouds. He is given the kingly epithet that was attributed to Baal (Ps. 68:4). We are told that Yahweh reigns (Pss. 93:3; 97:1 and 99:1).

God reigns over the nations (Ps. 47:8). He sits enthroned upon the cherubim (Ps. 99:1). He is a God feared in the council of the holy ones (Ps. 89:7). He is a great king above all gods (Pss. 95:3; 96:4).

These statements are more than polemics against Baal worship where Baal was proclaimed as king.¹⁰ From the beginning of Israel's existence, the sovereignty of God was

¹⁰ We note that in the Baal myth, Baal drove out Yamm, the sea god from the throne of kingship:

šmk. at. aymr. aymr. mr. ym mr ym
lks'ih. nhr. lkht. drkth.
(*Drive out Yamm. Drive Yamm
from his throne, from the seat of
his government*).

See Gordon, 68:19-20, p. 180.

paramount in Israel's world view and was regarded as the source of an ordered rule for Israelite life.

We will now consider the difference between Israel's conception of ordered life and that of Egyptian wisdom. In the latter view, 'Ma'at' was conceived to be that which guaranteed the continuance of the cosmic and social world of humanity. Thus it has been variously translated as 'truth', 'right', 'justice', 'basic order' and 'world order'.¹¹

This world view was based on mythical abstractions for 'nature' and 'the world'. On the other hand, Israel did not abstract in such manner but tended to be pre-occupied with her experience of God's sustaining deeds.

The Hebrew counterparts of 'Ma'at',¹² such as מִשְׁפָּט (*justice*) and דֶּרֶךְ (*way, rule, government*) were concerned with practical affairs in which God's rule was manifest. He not only created what was necessary for a purposeful life but also sustained that ordered state of affairs.

¹¹Gerhard von Rad, Wisdom in Israel (London: Student Christian Movement, 1972), p. 72.

¹²The Canaanite counterpart was 'tpt'. See Gordon, 2Aqht. v.6-8, p.248; 127:45-47, p. 194; and 51 iv:44-46, p.171. The Akkadian counterpart for justice is sa-pi-it. See F.C. Fensham, "Widow, Orphan and the Poor in Ancient Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature", Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XXI (1962), 132. Sa-pi-it was administered by a judge (da-a-a-nam). See Codex Hammurabi 5.3.1 in Riekele Borger, Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1963), III, Tafel 12.

He maintained the seasons, the fertility of the soil and the provision of life-giving rain. He also provided for the social life of humanity by providing and perpetuating an ordered rule of human kingship for Israel. Symptomatic of such a just rule was adequate sustenance for the orphan, widow and stranger, etc. and the acknowledgement that God was a lover of justice.

II. Societal Ethos

Just as sustenance and creation were related with one aspect primary and prominent and the other aspect secondary and subdued, so also in societal ethos there existed a primary-secondary relationship. Our evidence shows that justice was by far the dominating motif. But this does not mean that there was a subjection of sustainability to the role of unimportance.

In fact both of these motifs were shown to be evidence of later interpretations of older texts and indications of what was important for later times.

Justice has been shown to be related particularly to the institutions of Kingship and the Sages where there existed a concern for the righteous rule of the king in the former institution and for the praise and welfare of the 'righteous' in the latter.

The motifs of sustainability however tend to gravitate towards the institutions of Kingship and the Cult.

In Kingship, we saw that one view of the Davidic kingship ideal was that if the king's son followed God's laws, the divine covenantal promise to perpetuate the dynasty would be preserved (Psalm 132:12). Thus the covenantal motif represents an aspect of the Israelite world view that shows a concern for world order.

As far as human sustainability in relation to the world of nature is concerned, we look to those texts and institutions that celebrate God's sustaining acts in nature. For example, in Psalm 104, we saw that humanity's part in the sustainability of the world was dependent upon God's activity of sustenance. God causes the sun to rise and set and so sets the boundaries of time within which human beings can work for their sustenance.

In Psalm 8, the Israelite is given the role of stewardship in which to govern the creatures of the earth. He is to carry out this stewardship with God's assistance. It is not explicitly stated in this psalm, but we may infer a connection between justice and sustainability and state that one's execution of the commission of stewardship is an exercise of justice. Without a sense of justice, the Israelite is likely to fail in stewardship upsetting the balance of cause and effect of the kind that the author of Psalm 104 discerns in the realm of nature.

In the Israelite view, both justice and human sustainability are part of the world view in which life is cosmically and socially preserved. The societal

institutions have arisen to ensure that such preservation takes place. The celebration of justice and sustainability creates and maintains the occupation of mind (Geistesbeschäftigung) that respects what God is doing.

As God visits the earth, the farmer provides the furrows and ridges to catch the autumnal showers (Ps. 65:11) and so can become primed in worship for a relationship of dependence - displaying an attitude which is conducive to producing the needed grain. And when God provides the earth with its increase (Ps. 67:7), the Israelite returns to his festive celebrations of praise for God's harvests.

III. Protology 'and' Societal Ethos

So far we have considered the Israelite world view in its partial aspects, first protology and secondly, societal ethos. It would appear that protology expressed an earlier world view than did societal ethos. At least protological sustenance appeared early in Israel's history. But it would be incorrect to suggest that wherever the motif of sustenance appears in isolation (Pss. 29; 46; 47; 48; 66: 1-12; 67; 76; 77:14-21; 87; 93; 98; 113; 114; 129 and 135) it is earlier.

In the case of Psalm 135:15-18, we have a polemic against idols, which is a Wisdom interest, and the psalm is far from early.

We have already shown that several psalms with a

wisdom background contain creation motifs. Thus we would anticipate finding them in Psalm 135. But even though they are overtly absent there, they are latent in the thinking of the author.

In fact the total spectrum of motifs could be latent in the poet's thought. The rebuke of the idol-worshipping nations implies the justice motif that the only right entity to worship is Yahweh the true Creator, even though this implication is not spelled out.

It follows that the psalms analyzed in Chapter TWO as well as those analyzed in Chapter THREE are data for illustrating the world view of protology and societal ethos. Whatever motifs are absent from the psalms in both chapters in many cases could be part of the intentionality and Geistesbeschäftigung (mind-set) of the author as well as those that are overtly expressed.

It also follows that the setting of the psalms and the institutional backgrounds of their motifs cannot be differentiated entirely on the basis of the various coherences of motif that form the structure of Chapters TWO and THREE. This conclusion correlates with our finding that the motifs of the psalms we have studied are distributed across generic lines of demarkation.

The significance of the copula in the title of this sub-section is that the inter-relationship between protology and societal ethos, whether expressed in the total spectrum

or only partially expressed, amounts to the Israelite world view.

The world view is that the human role in societal ethos is in response to Yahweh's role in protology. We can speak of such a response because humans are dependent upon Yahweh's creative and sustaining activities in order that they may participate in the ordering of a just and sustainable society. Theologically, human justice and sustainability derive their efficacy from the action of God in creation and sustenance.

The theological primacy of protology is recognized in the communal hymnic psalms by their authors and can be deduced from the evidence that the frequency of the motifs of sustenance far exceeds that of the motifs of societal ethos. We have found such evidence in both of Chapters TWO and THREE.

IV. The Role of Nature in the World-View

We have already hinted at the role of nature in the world view of our texts by declaring the validity of a non-dualistic cosmos and by asserting that the created world of nature is not to be identified with God but conceived to be dependent upon God.

A. Nature in protology

The world of nature receives an honored place in the communal hymnic psalms. It is the result of God's handiwork.

God is praised because of the wonder and mystery associated with such work. The variety of words used to describe God's wonderful deeds is indicative of the rich appreciation the poets had for the acts of creation and sustenance.

In worship, the attention given to the elements of nature serves the purpose of making Yahweh the center of devotion and occupation of mind. In the light of such attitudes of mind we may make some observations about our modern preaching.

Any deficiency in preaching and worship on the themes of creation and sustenance results in a weakening of our relationship with God. Giving greater attention to these themes develops more sensitivity to the relationship between God and the created order and a greater respect for the right of that order to exist.

The communal hymnic psalms show that the created order exists in its own right and needs no human approval or recognition for its right to exist. The created order itself is capable of praising God without articulation by language, but by its very existence demonstrating God's wonderful deeds:

*The heavens are telling the glory of God
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*¹³

¹³Psalm 19:2. cf. "All your works shall give you thanks, O Yahweh" (Ps. 145:10).

The created order also perceives God's sustenance:

*The heavens proclaim God's righteousness.*¹⁴

The role of nature within the world view is also expressed by cause and effect statements. In the main, these are evidence of a wisdom background, although prophetic circles surrounding such figures as Amos could have been responsible for some of these expressions through their involvement in the cult.

The didactic question, "*Who is mighty as you, O Yahweh?*" (Ps. 89:8a) is answered by the statement, "*You rule the raging of the sea*" (v.9). The effect is the raging and the cause is the might of Yahweh.

The statement, "*The rocks are a refuge for badgers*" (Ps. 104:18) answers a question a sage may have put to one of his students, "*Why did God make the rocks?*"

The created order resonates to the will and purpose of God and each creature serves its appointed function. The fact that the earth is full of God's creatures (Ps. 104:24) suggests the thought that each of these creatures has an ecological function to serve.

More and more we are learning the intricacy of such a web of life or discovering for ourselves what the hymn writer perceived in simplicity. He knew when he wrote:

¹⁴Psalm 97:6.

*Yonder is the sea, great and wide
which teems with things in-numerable,¹⁵
living things both great and small,*

that the cycle of predator and its prey was kept in motion in such a manner that abundance resulted.

It is apparent from the depletion of such abundance in the modern world and the ever increasing list of creatures fast approaching extinction, that many of us have yet to discover what the hymn-writer knew, that God has a purpose for all of his creatures and that we need to respect this God-creature relationship.

The relationship between God and the created order also involves a process of sustenance, the purpose of which is to maintain the natural functions initiated in creation.

Several communal hymnic psalms praise God for his continuance and maintenance of those natural functions. There is quite a large catalogue of such functions mentioned:

scattering snow and frost,
forming and melting ice,
making clouds and rain,
sending forth the wind (Ps. 47),
maintaining the circuit of the sun (Pss. 19; 104),
forming thunder, lightning, earthquake and
floods (Ps. 29) and

¹⁵ Psalm 104:25

causing the roaring and foaming
of the sea (Ps. 46:3).¹⁶

The continuance of the sustaining action can also take the form of God's acts in history. We may note in this connection that there was no distinction made between these acts and the ones just described. God divided the sea (Ps. 78:13) and made water to come from a rock (Ps. 78:16).¹⁷

In similar manner, in order to preserve and sustain Israel, God slew the famous kings Sihon and Og (Ps. 136:19, 20) thereby inspiring the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan.

B. Nature in societal ethos

Before looking at the biblical picture of nature in societal ethos, we will make a few observations from our modern perspective.

Nature in societal ethos involves human activity at two levels. The first level is where we see ourselves as creatures relating with the other creatures as their stewards. The second level involves us in our institutional life where our society makes its impact upon the world of nature.

¹⁶To this list we may add further functions such as making the stars and the moon to shine (Ps. 136:7-9), sending rain showers (Ps. 65:10), making grass (Ps. 104:14) and making pastures (Ps. 65:12).

¹⁷See also Psalm 105:41 and Psalm 136:13.

At the natural level we relate with nature in virtue or our creatureliness. We have at times lost sight of our status as creatures in a preoccupation of mind that puts us aloof from the world of nature, arrogantly dominating other species and ruling them as tyrants.

Many of us have come to recognize the folly of threatening the life of the creatures around us beyond the threats that one would expect from natural predators. Lymnological pollution, for example, has been known to progress by successive stages along food chains and the webs of life until it comes full circle to threaten us.

Our recognition of our own creatureliness may in the end save us from such dire threats, particularly as we develop a sensitivity to the life about us. Our study of all life forms and our analysis of the inter-relationships between the species would bring about the kind of wonder and discovery that the hymn writer has experienced and expressed.

At the societal level also, we may relate with nature. It is possible for us to take a non-determinist view of the world and not take for granted the deterioration of the life about us. We are given the role of stewards of God's creation and thereby have a hand in the way natural events are directed.¹⁸

¹⁸Ps. 8 indicates awesome powers at human disposal (vv. 5-8).

Now we turn to the biblical scene. According to Psalm 8, human beings are capable of determining the life of domestic and wild animals, birds and sea creatures. Human dominion over them involves caring for the future of these and other species.

Psalm 8 envisages a situation where human and creaturely roles are meant to function in complementary fashion. In Psalm 104, human activity does not dominate the scene. There is conceived to be a harmonious balance expressed in the cause and effect relationships.

It is overtly stated in these psalms that the complementary roles are the fulfillment either of God's purpose or his word. It follows that any breach of that purpose is to contravene the ethical demands of God. The implication of these demands is that human exercise of stewardship toward the created world order is a question of justice.

Considering our own modern situation in the light of the biblical requirement, it would be unjust to neglect our role as stewards. On the other hand, we would be acting justly by maintaining the sustainability of the species and ensuring an ecological balance in nature.

Even though the Israelite world view lacks such ecological terminology, nevertheless it does recognize in simplistic terms the cause and effect relationships that go toward supporting what we would call an ecological balance.

In the Israelite world view, there is a recognition on the part of the hymn writer of the human limitations that exist as humans relate with the world of nature. We find adopted there an attitude of humility before God's creatures. There are certain things that humans cannot do but which only God can do.

The rhetorical questions put to the readers save them from falling into arrogance: *"Who among the sons of the gods (אֱלֹהִים יְלִידִים) is like Yahweh?"* (Ps. 89:7). If the council of the sons of the gods cannot conquer the sea monster, Rahab (v. 10) then surely human efforts would be of no avail.¹⁹ The institution of the Sages has done much to propagate such attitudes of human humility.

Humility is necessary also for our modern circumstances. It teaches us that our relationship with nature is limited by the relationship that God has with nature.

A healthy respect for what God does through the tempest, the earthquake and fire, reminds us of our creatureliness and that there are limits intended by God beyond which he desires that we not go, lest the world we live in reach a point where it can no longer sustain itself.

The Israelite was aware that famine could strike

¹⁹ Note the similarity with the question in Job 40:25: *"Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?"*

and that the earth could fail to bring its increase. God sent the rain, but the farmer had to do his part making furrows and small irrigation channels for the water to flow.²⁰ He had to exercise his sustainability in order that the grain appear. Then could the grass and crops serve their natural function as suppliers of food in response to the aim of God.

We have now identified the role of nature in societal ethos where it relates to the human endeavour in which human beings show their natural creatureliness and in which they may demonstrate their humanity in social programs involving the natural world order.

C. Nature in the interdependence of protology and societal ethos: The "God-humanity-nature" relationship.

We have seen that the world of nature responds to the creative and sustaining activity of God and that it is therefore involved in protology. We have seen also that the world of nature has also responded to human activity and that it is therefore involved in societal ethos.

A further relationship exists where humanity has responded to God's call to stewardship. Where such a response occurs, a secondary relationship is set up.

²⁰ See Psalm 65:9-10.

Nature relates to God *via* humanity. This gives us two channels for nature's relationship with God, one direct and one indirect.

Again nature may relate with humanity where the latter has failed to relate well with God bringing a set of cause and effect processes which culminate in the deterioration of nature. The opposite effect can be achieved of virility, liveliness and ecological sustenance when human stewardship has been achieved.

These sets of relationship have their complement in those where God relates directly with nature and indirectly *via* humanity.

The total of these inter-relationships may be designated the "*God-humanity-nature*" relationship. Such a relationship is described in the communal hymnic psalms, not with such a designation, but in terms of a variety of motifs that express the interdependence of protology and societal ethos.

The God-humanity-nature relationship in all its positive aspects is achieved when the world view of humanity sees the desirability of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos.

Such a world view is found in the communal hymnic psalms and is fostered in the worship which celebrates such interdependence. It is fostered not only in the cult but also in the institutions of Kingship and the Sages and the

legal institution of the Gate.

As the cult has reflected the influence of the other institutions it becomes worthwhile to concentrate on its role in the propagation of the 'interdependence' and the world view it represents.

Such a concentration leads us to consider the significance for preaching of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos in the context of worship where the celebration of praise provides the desired occupation of mind (Geistesbeschäftigung) for propagating the 'interdependence'.

As we concentrate on the role of worship with its functions of praise and proclamation, we are faced with the prospect of interpreting the meaning of the text for us and of understanding the biblical world view of 'interdependence' in the light of our own circumstances.

Such a task of interpretation and understanding calls for a determination of the appropriate hermeneutic that will provide the basis for preaching on the interdependence of protology and societal ethos and for proclaiming the values inherent in the God-humanity-nature relationship.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HERMENEUTIC OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF PROTOLOGY
AND SOCIETAL ETHOS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR PREACHINGI. The Implications of the Gadamer-Betti, Palmer-Hirsch
Debate for Understanding the World View of the
Interdependence of Protology and Societal Ethos

In order to understand the biblical world view of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos, we need to distinguish between the authorial meaning of the text and the meaning which the text holds for the interpreter. Such a distinction lies at the heart of the Gadamer-Betti, Palmer-Hirsch debate.

The Betti versus Gadamer debate is represented by Hans-Georg Gadamer's "Wahrheit und Methode" (1960)¹ and Emilio Betti's "Teoria generale della interpretazione" (1955)². This debate has its parallel discussion between E.D. Hirsch, Jr. with his book, "Validity in Interpretation" (1967)³ and Richard E. Palmer with his book, "Hermeneutics" (1969)⁴.

¹Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

²Emilio Betti, Teoria generale della interpretazione 2 vols (Milan: Giuffrè, 1955).

³E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

⁴Richard E. Palmer, Hermeneutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969).

Building his work on that of Emilio Betti, Hirsch claimed that all valid interpretation is founded on the recognition of what the author meant.⁵ With his Aristotelian styled definitions, he eliminated from the category of validity many concepts that have commonly been regarded as ingredients of interpretation, viz., 'understanding', 'significance', and some aspects of 'implication'.

When an interpreter of a text gains some significance from the meaning of that text, that 'significance', which is an implication of the meaning, is valid only when the verbal meaning of the interpreter is identical with the meaning that the author intended.⁶

Such authorial meaning also includes genre, the total meaning or type. The sub-meanings or traits interact with the total meaning to produce an intrinsic genre or at least what we may ascertain was the intrinsic genre of what was probably the intrinsic genre.⁷

According to the arguments of Hirsch in "Validity in Interpretation", we are limited to a narrow range of meanings for valid interpretation. It would follow that the only valid understanding of the world view of interdependence of

⁵Hirsch. p.126.

⁶Ibid., p.39.

⁷Ibid., p.17.

protology and societal ethos that is appropriate to the text of the communal hymnic psalms is the understanding of the Israelite author or authors.

But the title of our sub-section is not speaking so much about the Israelite understanding as about our understanding of the Israelite view. According to Hirsch our understanding is valid only when it coincides with the authorial understanding.

Such a position by Hirsch has the limitation of excluding from valid interpretation any meaning or understanding which is not authorial.⁸ It lacks the scope to deal with broader hermeneutical questions. His narrow Cartesian styled objectivity has resulted in the subject-object split in which there is a division between the text as object and us as subjects trying to understand the meaning of that object.

Hirsch's position fails to realize the understanding that comes from the phenomenological existential analysis which accounts for the human existence of the interpreter who endeavours to relate to that part of his world that includes the text and its author.

For Heidegger, it is the ontology of such a world that lies prior to both objectivity and subjectivity⁹ and

⁸ Later on he included 'understanding' in the realm of validation. See E.D. Hirsch, Jr. "Modern Theories of Interpretation", Journal of Philosophy, LV (1975).

⁹ Palmer, p.132.

which allows Being to come to light.¹⁰ It is through the world of the interpreter, which is part of the ontological existence of Dasein (Being in the world), that understanding, self-understanding and meaning occur and provide the basis for language and interpretation.¹¹

Such understanding explicates pre-understanding and allows the interpreter to modify his world view in order to see in new light his relationship to what was pre-understood. This process leads to further understanding and thus to a circular sequence which Heidegger calls the 'hermeneutical circle'.¹²

According to the later Heidegger, understanding is explicated in language which serves the function of letting Being be and of allowing Being to come to expression (Ausdruck).¹³

The interpreter is often in a position to see the Being that opens itself regarding the text and thereby to see something which the author did not or could not express.¹⁴

The place where Being comes to light (Dasein) is no

¹⁰Paul J. Achtemeier, Introduction to New Hermeneutic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969) pp.29,31.

¹¹Palmer, pp. 133,135.

¹²Achtemeier, p.36.

¹³Ibid. p.49.

¹⁴Ibid. p.53. Dilthey had used the term 'Ausdruck' to connote the mechanics of speech such as tone, mimicry, mannerisms and the context in which the speech was delivered.

longer merely the world of the author, but also the world of the interpreter and his understanding which includes the retrieval of what is unsaid in the text.

In distinction from Hirsch, Gadamer claims that it is not possible to limit the meaning of a text to be understood to the supposed opinion of the author.¹⁵ For Gadamer, understanding does not primarily mean to reason one's way back to the past event of what is said and meant by the author, but to have a present involvement in what is said.¹⁶

This involvement includes an understanding which creates the hermeneutical horizon within which the meaning of the text is realized.¹⁷ It takes into account the historical distance between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter. These horizons correspond respectively to the Heideggerian 'worlds' of both author and interpreter.

This theory holds that the past and the present are related by a 'fusion of horizons' (Horizontverschmelzung).¹⁸ The horizons of the interpreter and the text are different at first. After the interpreter's encounter with the text,

¹⁵Gadamer, p.473.

¹⁶Ibid. p.353.

¹⁷Ibid. p.357

¹⁸Wolfhart Pannenberg, Basic Questions in Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), I, 117.

a new horizon is formed which comprehensively comprises the two originally separate horizons.¹⁹

Hirsch criticizes this theory as an example of radical historicism²⁰, accusing Gadamer for confusing, in the fusion process, the meaning of the text and its significance. But what Gadamer is actually doing is not to confuse authorial meaning and significance but to bring by fusion the interpreter's horizon in line with the horizon of the text.

In the hermeneutical debate Palmer takes sides with Gadamer in swinging away from rules for 'objectively' valid understanding.²¹ Palmer prefers the subjectivity of the 'dynamic interaction' of experience in the fusion of horizons.²²

Applying the theory of the fusion of horizons to our understanding of the world view of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos, we come to distinguish between the Israelite world view in the communal hymnic psalms and our own world view. The hermeneutic interpretation results when the latter world view accommodates to the former in the process of fusion.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.117.

²⁰ Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, pp.40, 254.

²¹ Palmer, p.215.

²² Ibid. p.216.

As there are at least as many world views as there are interpreters, it follows that there will need to be a multiplicity of interpretations unless in the fusion process the interpreters forsake their world view for the Israelite world view.

What often happens is that in attempting to accommodate the Israelite world view to his philosophical framework of presuppositions, the interpreter modifies his pre-understanding to form a new understanding.

This fusion of horizons is repeated over and over again in sequences of understanding where each understanding becomes a pre-understanding for the next understanding and so on in the process that we have designated as the hermeneutical circle.

For each set of philosophical systems of thought there would result a characteristic hermeneutical circle of understanding according to the manner in which the fusion of horizons took place. For example, a transcendentalist hermeneutic would result in a fusion that was different from one that was immanentalist and these two fusions would be different from one that was existentialist.

Such a procedure of distinguishing between the approaches according to different philosophical systems has been attempted for an interpretation of the Genesis accounts of creation,²³ but this kind of procedure is much larger a

²³See Norman J. Young, "Creation, Hermeneutics and the Life of Faith", Drew Gateway, XLV:1-3 (1974-1975).

task than is necessary for the purpose of this dissertation.

It suffices for us to work out the hermeneutic for the existentialist approach that has sprung from the phenomenology of Heidegger and has been developed by such thinkers as Gadamer and Pannenberg.

So far we have considered in existential terms the fusion of horizons which is at the heart of Gadamer's hermeneutic. The question which now remains is, "What aspects of the Israelite world view are acceptable for the fusion of horizons?"

The first aspect is the primacy of God's sustenance. Just as the experience of God's sustenance in the provision of daily needs and his deliverance through Heilsgeschichte formed the basis for the Israelite reflection upon God's activity in creation, so also for the Christian does the experience of the saving acts of God in Christ form the basis for his praise of God for his creative deeds.

The second fuseable aspect of the Israelite world view is the primacy of protology. For the Israelite it was God's initiative in creation and sustenance which has prompted the human response of societal ethos. For the Christian also, the prime element is protology.

God's activity is the basis for the human response of justice and sustainability. God's sovereignty is efficacious as humans in their individual and societal functions carry out the role of stewards toward the created world order. Without the primacy of God's power and

sustenance, human effort is of little avail.

The third fuseable element in the Israelite world view is the interdependence between protology and societal ethos. Such an interdependence is also desirable for a modern mind set (*Geistesbeschäftigung*) so that whenever one speaks of God's creation and sustenance or of human justice and sustainability, it is within the total framework or mind set of this interdependence. With the total framework in mind, the human effort of justice and sustainability is less likely to go awry.

The fourth fuseable aspect concerns the role of nature in the world view. The created world order exists in its own right and needs no human recognition for its right to exist. Its existence is a demonstration of God's power and ecological purpose.

An effort on our part to appreciate the cause and effect functions of nature and to understand the intricacies of the ecological webs of life will go a long way to maintain the variety of the species or to retard the trends toward extinction.

The fifth fuseable element is the human recognition of one's own creatureliness. We are part of the created world order and anything that we do to control that order has a reciprocal effect upon ourselves. A study of and an awareness of the consequences of our actions may caution us to modify our behaviour in relation to nature and thereby to avoid consequences that would jeopardize the sustainability

and life of humanity and the sub-human world on this planet.

Sixthly, in our dominion over the species, we are capable in our human institutions of caring for their future to ensure their survival and thereby to improve our chances of survival. An effort on our part to resist being tyrants and to humbly recognize our human limitations in relation to nature will do much to ensure the sustainability of the created world order.

Seventhly, nature plays a vital role in the interdependence of protology and societal ethos. The initial aim of God is to sustain not only humanity but the whole of the created world order. Nature has a purpose for God and a purpose for humanity. In turn, humanity's care of the created world order can be a response to God's care, provision and sustenance directed to that order. These reciprocal relationships constitute the God-humanity-nature relationship.

Last, human justice plays a vital function in the fusion of world horizons because of its role in maintaining the God-humanity-nature relationship. Such maintenance is not an optional task for humanity. It is mandatory for all of us to do our part to ensure its success. The result of such endeavour will be the realization of a just and sustainable world society.

It follows that the hermeneutic endeavour to bring about a fusion of the Israelite world horizon as perceived in the communal hymnic psalms with our own world horizons

will contribute much to advance the cause of a just and sustainable society.

Having established the significance and necessity for such a fusion, we are now in a position to determine the mode of language with which to articulate the fusion. In this connection Pannenberg's principles of hermeneutic will prove useful.

II. An Understanding of World Horizons in the Light of Pannenberg's Principles of Hermeneutic

When we consider the language that articulates the Horizontverschmelzung, we have a variety of terms at our disposal. Following in the tradition of Bultmann's language hermeneutic, Fuchs has given us the term 'language event' (Sprachereignis) to designate God's saving event. When we are confronted with the text, the 'Word of God' becomes an event for us in becoming a recurring word for us.²⁴

We also have the terminology of Ebeling who uses the term 'word event' (Wortgeschehen) to designate God's saving event (Heilsgeschehen).²⁵

Pannenberg has drawn our attention to the fact that both Fuchs and Ebeling talk about the text 'speaking' to us and 'confronting us' and that Gadamer has built upon their hermeneutic in using such 'confrontation' language.²⁶

²⁴ See J.M. Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Parth" in J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb Jr. eds., The New Hermeneutic (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), II, 57.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 57.

²⁶ Pannenberg, p. 115.

For Gadamer, it is the language of confrontation that occurs when the text confronts us and produces the fusion of horizons. However, for Pannenberg, it is not the language of the text that speaks, nor does such language produce any fusion of horizons. It is the fusion of horizons articulated by the interpreter that forms the speaking of the text and which unites him with the text.²⁷

To subjectify the text and to objectify the interpreter is a false way to speak in the attempt to overcome the subject/object split. Both subjective and objective categories reside within the consciousness of the interpreter. Actually the perception he has of the text's horizon as subject addresses his own awareness of the horizon as object.

According to Pannenberg, when the fusion of horizons occurs, the interpreter finds linguistic expression which combines the essential content of the text with his own contemporary horizon.

In contrast to Gadamer who has broken the predicative structure of language in speaking of a text confronting the interpreter, Pannenberg strives to retain the predicative structure and to preserve the historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of distance that exists between the text and the interpreter.²⁸

²⁷. Ibid., p.123

²⁸ He builds on Dilthey's concept of the historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of understanding which has a temporal development. Ibid.

For Pannenberg, it is the universal history (Universalgeschichte) which bridges that temporal distance.²⁹ It is in the framework of universal history that both text and interpreter stand and where the interpreter can find predicative language to articulate his relationship with the text.

The significance of Pannenberg's hermeneutic for understanding the interdependence of protology and societal ethos is that this world view and our own both stand in the framework of universal history and thereby bear some relation to one another. When we articulate the fusion that occurs between them we are finding language to express either a concurrence of our world view with the Israelite view or an accommodation of our world view to incorporate the Israelite world view.

This discussion alerts us to the pitfall of anthropomorphizing the text in our own articulation of its message and of failing to recognize the poetic character of its composition. The R.S.V. reading of Psalm 19:3: *"Day to day pours forth speech and night to night declares knowledge"* misses the intended personification that is carried by the wisdom concept of 'the creation uttering praise to God'. The reading: *"Each day speaks to the next day and each night declares knowledge to the next night"* recaptures the original poetic expression of personification.

²⁹ Ibid., p.69.

Such expression is permissible in poetry then as it is now, but to speak in prosaic language about the text speaking is to confuse the meaning we attach to the structure of language.

But there are some expressions in the Israelite world view, which, even if we make allowances for their poetic character, still pose a problem for hermeneutics when one is considering them for fusion into one's world view.

Are we to accept a world view that conceives of mythical sea dragons such as Leviathan and Rahab or are we to apply to such a view the process of demythologization? To answer such a question, we turn to the hermeneutic of Gerhard von Rad.

III. The Value of Gerhad von Rad's Understanding of Hermeneutics as Tradition-history for Determining What We May Accept or Reject

Hitherto we have considered the hermeneutic of Hirsch which accepts as valid the meaning which the author intended. On the contrary, the approach of tradition history (Traditionsgeschichte) is a development beyond what the author meant, for it considers meaning which the author may not have intended.

The author may not have been aware, for example, that what he has written was a further development of what a previous author had written or what he himself had previously written. Yet he may have benefitted from the

earlier thought which had filtered down temporally through cultural and social channels to constitute part of his mind-set or part of his existential world of pre-conceptions.

The tradition history of the author's pre-conceptions is part of the hermeneutic of his recorded text. This partly accounts for Gerhard von Rad having designated tradition history as a hermeneutical principle.

For Gerhard von Rad, it is in tradition history that the word event occurs³⁰ - occurring both in the continuity and discontinuity of that history. One value of such a view is that it recognizes the part of the modern interpreter and his own existential situation in that historical process of re-interpretation. It allows for the historical distance between the interpreter and the previous tradition.

Pannenberg has criticized Gadamer's theory of the fusion of horizons for not making such an allowance.³¹

³⁰Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), II, 357).

³¹Pannenberg, p.132. His thesis is that "only in the context of universal history can the 'then' of the text be bound to the 'now' of the interpreter not eliminating the historical difference between them and preserving it and bridging over it in the nexus of events linking them both". See p. 132.

Historie, the activity of modern historiographers, and Heilsgeschichte are two dimensions of Universalgeschichte. See Carl E. Braaten, History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p.116.

Pannenberg uses the term Überlieferungsgeschichte to render the concept of tradition history in the sense of the transmission of the tradition of Heilsgeschichte. Ibid., p.113.

Gerhard von Rad's hermeneutic, however, allows for dissenting voices which break the continuity of a biblical tradition and for false witnesses who give rise to a discontinuity.

As we reflect further on this allowance, we recognize that 'fusion' is not necessarily the best word to describe what is happening in the Horizontverschmelzung. Car Braaten translates the German word as the 'merging of horizons' which is some improvement.³² However his translation doesn't quite allow for either the assent or dissent of the interpreter.

Walter Wink has presented a hermeneutical theory that builds upon that of Gadamer and Pannenberg and which takes both assent and dissent into account. He speaks of elements in the text and the interpreter's understanding 'receding', 'coming to the fore', 'being negated' or 'being affirmed'.³³

In the fusion, the interpreter and the text are negated and then in part affirmed. Then the interpreter negates that negation and partly comes to terms with the horizon of the text. The communal dialogue between interpreter and text, in which each alternates with the roles of subject and object, issues forth in transformation of the interpreter.

³²Braaten. See Footnote 31, p. 145.

³³Walter Wink, The Bible in Human Transformation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p.70.

The categories of assent or dissent, affirmation or negation and continuity or discontinuity all qualify the degree of acceptance or rejection of the world view of the text.

One value of Gerhard von Rad's hermeneutic is that tradition history helps us to determine what elements of the Israelite world view can be accepted or rejected in the merging of world horizons.

Recognition of the primacy of God's sustenance draws our attention to the fact that in the process of tradition history sustenance became the basis for further reflection upon God's creation. Here is a case of continuity in the tradition. It is not only continuity in the text but it can also be continuity for the interpreter if he assents to that more enlightened conception of the world view.

The knowledge of God as Creator was not only an outgrowth of Israelite faith, but it can also be the possession of the Christian interpreter who reflects on his own faith in a sustaining God. In this kind of reflection, the Israelite world view has meaning and value for us.

However, if we rest our understanding at this stage of enlightenment, we are left with merely a romantic conception of the Israelite world view. The later stage of reflection in the tradition history concerning societal ethos makes up for what is lacking in the earlier stages of the tradition.

This stage brings a sense of ethos concerning what humanity can be doing to maintain the world order intended by God. The later stages of the tradition history which may have been concurrent with the traditions concerning creation bring an awareness of the justice and sustainability that is required of humanity.

We, in our turn, as interpreters of the tradition of interdependence of protology and societal ethos, are in a position to build upon and further develop the Israelite world view. In order to do so, we find it necessary to create our own continuities and discontinuities.

One way that this can be done is to follow through the history of the traditions both in canonical and non-canonical literature written since the writing of the communal hymnic psalms.

One example of such activity would be to identify Sirach's re-interpretation of Psalm 104 and his comment on the 'word' creation theology of verses 24-26, when he says, *"By his own action, he (God) achieves his end, and by his word all things are held together"* (Sirach 43: 23-26), and to recognize the continuity of his re-interpretation.

The outcome of such a procedure would bring to light several trajectories of a tradition showing, for example, that the tradition of Sirach above follows in the same trajectory as the antecedent tradition of 'word' creation theology in Psalm 33:6.

To follow this procedure with the sustenance, justice and sustainability motifs would be an enlightening experience, if this were possible, but it is often problematical establishing in the case of each motif which psalms contain the antecedent and subsequent stages of the tradition.

It suffices for us to note the process of tradition internally within an individual psalm and to observe where other psalms also show a similar development of tradition. Such a procedure has already been followed in determining the primacy of God's sustenance and the primacy of protology in the history of tradition.

From this point, we can make the hermeneutical step of considering the tradition and its world view as a candidate for modifying our world view in the merging of horizons. Following Gerhard von Rad's principle of making a distinction between the continuity and the discontinuity, we can proceed directly to the task of determining what traditions we can accept or reject without having to follow their trajectories into the New Testament, into non-canonical material and into the literature of the Christian Church. In doing this we continue the tradition history into our own epoch.

In Section I of this chapter, we stated in summary fashion eight examples of fuseable aspects of the Israelite world view that we can accept. What then may we reject?

We may reject any concept for our world view that represents a pre-scientific stage of thinking.

As stated before, we cannot be expected to adopt for ourselves a world view that conceives of mythical sea serpents and dragons. We may accept the notion that creation involved bringing order out of chaos, a view that would harmonize with an evolutionary understanding of creation and a process view of creation as the execution of the initial aim of God. But such acceptance doesn't oblige us as well to conceive of creation as a conflict by God against opposing primeval forces.

Secondly we may reject those notions of God's sustenance that picture Israel in miraculous terms as the recipient of God's sustaining action or Israel as the only recipient of God's grace. We may do this by making a distinction in the history of Israel's sustenance and preservation between *Geschichte* and *Historie*.

This is not to deny that God acted providentially in guiding the Israelite tribes out of Egypt, but when we read of miraculously styled accounts of God sustaining his people with rivers of water gushing forth from rocks as in Psalm 78:15,16 we would exclude these events from those about which *Historie* can give an account.

A question of discontinuity arises when we interpret God's sustenance through his election of and covenant with Israel. The communal hymnic psalms leave us with the impression that God preserved Israel at the expense of other

nations. But our recognition of the prophetic tradition that God also elected and delivered the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (Amos 9:7), cautions us against accepting a too narrow view of Israel as God's elect people.

When the nations of the earth become so threatened by the depletion of the earth's resources that the quality of life in all parts of the earth becomes diminished, we cannot expect a God who sends rain on the just and unjust alike (Matt. 5:46) to favor any one nation with survival at the expense of others. The survival of the earth depends on the survival of all the nations that comprise it.

We may reject also from fusion with our world horizons any notion of societal ethos which represents societal institutions that no longer exist or for which there is no modern counterpart.

God may well have given support to the Davidic dynasty through his covenant with the royal sons, but past action is no guarantee that God will protect every modern dynasty of rulers from extinction, nor is it any guarantee that a modern republic will enjoy God's blessing of perpetuity.

Having made a rejection of such guarantees, however, does not require that we abandon in totality the kingship ideology of Israel. There remains much of value in that tradition which has given rise to a hope for an ideal just rule and which ultimately developed into the eschatological

hope for a Messiah figure to realize that rule.

Finally we must reject from fusion with our world horizons any concept of sustainability which pretends that humanity alone can bring about the survival of this planet. Fortunately such a view is not to be found in the communal hymnic psalms. In fact the message there is that any effort of sustainability on our part depends on God's sustenance to make it effective.

This sustenance is an ongoing process and requires an ongoing reinterpretation of the tradition of 'interdependence' to understand. It is in relation to such sustenance that our role of earth's caretaker has yet to be spelled out. Our own world view needs to be continually open for merging with newly conceived understanding of God's sustenance and what stewardship roles are required of us in a world where two-thirds of the population is hungry, under-nourished and under-developed.

Having clarified what we may accept into and reject from our modern world view, we are in a position to consider the appropriate methods for communicating the understanding of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos and its implications for a modern world view.

The media, literature and education are some examples of the modes of communication that readily come to mind, but we will not deal with these. We will deal, however, with preaching in the context of worship as an appropriate mode of communication and proclamation.

The hermeneutics of the merging of horizons and the re-interpretation of biblical traditions for our times has set the backgrounds for the task of preaching. We will now consider why preaching is an appropriate mode for transmitting the biblical tradition of 'interdependence'.

IV. Preaching as an Appropriate Mode of Proclamation to Transmit the Tradition of 'Interdependence' Reflected in the God-Humanity-Nature Relationship

As an oral process of communication, preaching lends itself well to transmitting thought that was at one time expressed orally in worship. We may state, without having to substantiate the claim, what is commonly understood, that the communal hymnic psalms were sung as hymns in the context of Israelite worship. The close proximity of the hymns to the preaching suggests that the hymns and preaching bore an affinity for one another.

In contexts outside of the psalms, such close proximity is also known, for example, in the prophetic literature where mention is made of cultic centers frequented by cultic prophets who often displayed their preaching skills.

Bethel and its sanctuary was such a cultic center where both sermon and hymns of praise could be heard. It was there that Amos came to preach. Even though he claimed not to be one of the cultic prophets, yet his message bore that characteristic which was common to the sanctuary, viz.,

the proximity of sermon and hymn. Portions of his message bear a striking resemblance to the protological praise which we find in the communal hymnic psalms:

*For lo, he who forms the mountains
and creates the wind,
and declares to man what is his thought;
who makes the morning darkness
and treads on the heights of the earth -
Yahweh, the God of hosts,
is his name!*

(Amos 4:13)³⁴

The prophetic appreciation of the value of hymn singing and the oral aspects of preaching is paralleled in the history of theology by modern efforts to spell out the oral dimensions of interpretation. This was the case for both Schleiermacher and Dilthey who paid attention to the psychological aspects of interpretation.

The Barthian restoration of the function of the proclamation of the gospel, from a liberalism that had become parched of its life giving benefits, has shown that the spoken word is essential to that proclamation. The 'word event' implies an event of transformation in which the text as subject holds in question the interpreter or congregation as object.

³⁴See also the reference to Pleides and Orion. Am.5:8.

The use of rhetoric during America's first Great Awakening by several preachers, illustrates the effectiveness of speech as oral communication to induce transformation within persons.

The emphasis upon historical-critical research in the liberal movement did much to drown out the rhetorical character of preaching and became a stumbling block for effective proclamation.

This is not to deny the value of the liberal tools of research nor is it to deny the continued benefits that we reap from the results of such research. But we have learned that effective proclamation of the gospel comes through authentic communication, part of which is oral speech.

As the theme of interdependence of protology and societal ethos found its expression both in prophetic preaching and in communal hymn singing within the Israelite cult, we can be sure that the oral process of preaching in the context of worship will serve as an appropriate mode of proclamation to transmit the tradition.

It follows that in preaching attention given to the oral techniques of delivery will facilitate the release of those feelings that were associated with oral delivery in the Israelite cult - feelings of adoration, praise and aesthetic appreciation of all that God has done and is doing.

The *Geistesbeschäftigung* of the ancient hymn writers dealing with the theme of the 'interdependence' was reinforced by the cognitive, conative and emotive power of

the poetry and music of the communal hymns.

The participants in worship reinforced the social solidarity and the efficacy of the social institutions that were reflected in the hymns they sang. As a result, the hymns became powerful vehicles for transmitting the tradition of 'interdependence'.

We too can participate in such transmission (Überlieferungsgeschichte), holding the attention of our hearers with a 'force' of speech and choice of words that evokes aesthetic appreciation, stirs the cognition of the intellect and drives the conation of the will.

This can happen when our speech is related thematically with other elements in the worship service, particularly with elements of praise for God's creation and sustenance, elements of confession for unjust acts committed and elements of dedication for the tasks of sustainability which we resolve to do as stewards of the earth.

The transmission occurs also when we rid our language of uninterpreted repetitions and of grammatical structure that has lost its predicative structure. It occurs also when we dispense with language that expresses dualistic thought and which alienates either of the sexes.

Preaching, which pays attention to the hermeneutic of the merging of horizons and which weighs up what must be accepted or rejected from the Israelite world view, has the best chance of transmitting the tradition of 'interdependence' and of setting in motion forces that will

move us toward the achievement of a just and sustainable society.

We turn now to consider in more detail the manner of preaching which will play a vital role in effecting that kind of society.

V. Preaching on the Total Spectrum of 'Interdependence'.

Preaching which deals with creation, sustenance, justice and sustainability will serve to advocate the benefits of 'interdependence'. However, so long as the framework of 'interdependence' is kept in mind, preaching on any one of these themes will have the power to convey the total spectrum.

The efficacy of such preaching depends much on how the biblical understanding of these themes is related to their modern counterparts. If God has sustained the earth in the past, how may we proclaim his sustenance in the present? If the earth and its biosphere show signs of deterioration, does this mean that God is failing to sustain it, or does it mean we have failed to co-operate with God to effect his initial aim to sustain it?

To answer these questions, we must consider what kind of response our preaching must make to the threat to the biosphere.

A. Preaching as the Church's faith response to the threat to the biosphere, advocating a new societal ethos to sustain it.

Preaching on 'interdependence' is not an optional task for an environmental enthusiast. It is mandatory for all who are called to preach and to make a faith response to the threat to the biosphere. The Church's concern to proclaim the gospel must include a mind-set to have the whole of creation brought under the transforming plan of God and not just the human portion of that creation. It follows that preaching must deal not only with individuals in their relationship with God but with the total God-humanity-nature relationship.

If our faith response is to be relevant, we must be informed about the nature of the threats that bear upon the earth and its biosphere. Section V of the Bibliography gives a list of books that will provide the reader with stimulating reading on this subject. It suffices to mention here, however, only some of the most recent findings in this area.

At the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Nairobi, December, 1975, questions were raised whether the earth and its biosphere will soon reach their limits in their capacity to sustain life. The problem has been related to the phenomena of human injustice and irresponsibility.

At this Assembly, Charles Birch, an Australian biologist questioned this sustainability with the following findings:

- 1. 775 million people (one-fifth of the world's population) live in poverty earning less than \$50 (US) per annum.*
- 2. In 1975, 300 million people received only two-thirds of their daily required needs of protein.*
- 3. In 1975, 30 million people died from malnutrition or starvation.*
- 4. The full extent of the earth's non-renewable resources of fossil fuels is unknown, but it is known that the world is running out of gas.*
- 5. The total amount of energy used in the world has been doubling every 11 years.*
- 6. Ten major industrial countries account for 75% of the world's energy consumption and the U.S.A. alone accounts for 35% of energy used in the world.*
- 7. Global pollution is doubling every 14 years. Increase of the number of nuclear reactors brings the threat that the pollution rate may accelerate.*

8. *Almost half of the world's scientists and technologists devote their skills to military research and development and military expenditure in developing countries doubles every 6 years.*³⁵

These and other findings³⁶ are sufficient to demonstrate the threat to the earth and its biosphere and to justify the question whether the earth is nearing the limits of its capacity to support life.

Preaching which fails to acquaint congregations with such problems is misguided and irrelevant. On the other hand preaching which brings a faith response to these issues is in harmony with a gospel that offers justice and survival to a threatened and despairing world.

The Church has made some faith-responses to some of these issues. ECLOF (Ecumenical Churches' Loan Fund) has granted reasonable loans at 3-5% to needy developmental projects and CCPD (Churches Commission for Popular Development) has set up development training programs in co-operation with such countries as Indonesia, Cameroon and

³⁵ Charles E. Birch "Creation, Technology and Human Survival", Ecumenical Review XXVIII:1 (January 1976), 66-79. The address was delivered to the W.C.C. Assembly on Dec.1, 1975. It is also recorded in David M. Paton (ed.) Breaking Barriers. Official Report of the 5th Assembly of the W.C.C. (London: SPCK, 1975).

³⁶ Further findings are analyzed in Charles E. Birch, Confronting the Future, Australia and the World: The Next Hundred Years. (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1975).

Ethiopia providing six month courses in agriculture, community organization and development-education.³⁷

In order to advocate such faith-responses as these in the effort to sustain the earth and its peoples, a new societal ethos is needed. Such societal ethos is derived from the world view of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos and may be inculcated by preaching on such interdependence. It follows that such preaching needs to be strong in its ethical challenge. It is to such concern that we now turn.

- B. Preaching as an ethical challenge to science, technology and economics with the 'interdependence' pre-occupation of mind to achieve a just and sustainable society.

From the list of findings summarized in the last sub-section, it is clear that many of the solutions to the problems stated must be provided from the world of science, technology and economics, for if a just and sustainable society is to be achieved, many of the pre-conceptions of each of these spheres will have to undergo radical transformation.

³⁷ Richard N. Dickinson, To Set at Liberty the Oppressed. Towards an Understanding of Christian Responsibilities of Development/Liberation (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975), pp.47, 48.

It is not our purpose here to spell out precisely what those scientific, technological and economic solutions might be, nor are we advocating that sermons be transformed into scientific reports and propositions.

What we are advocating is a style of preaching that takes into account the full spectrum of the interdependence of which we have been speaking, for it will call society to question its style of living and challenge the church as it is dispersed in the world to influence that world in the direction of making a transition to a just and sustainable society.

What then is a just and sustainable world society? First of all it is a society which conceives its unity as the inhabitants of one planet, earth, each segment of which recognizes its interdependence with each other segment.

It is a society in which the resources of the earth are equitably distributed and where its consumption of energy is tempered by a conservation planned for the sake of future generations.

Such was the vision of the Club of Rome in their second report when they advocated a slowing of the rate of economic growth in the industrialized countries and an increase in the rate of economic growth of the developing countries in order to improve the quality of

life of all this world's peoples.³⁸

The W.C.C. Conference on Church and Society meeting in Bucharest, 1974, conceived of a just and sustainable society as one in which the need for food is below the global capacity to supply it, in which pollutants are below the capacity of the ecosystem to absorb them and in which the rate of the use of non-renewable resources does not outrun the increase in resources made available through technology.³⁹

We may add from our studies a further aspect to such a society. It is a society which holds the world view of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos and which is bent on the sustainability of the earth.

In order to make the transition to such a society, a new understanding of the relation between God and the earth is needed. In order that such a transition be made, the W.C.C. Church and Society Working Group, meeting in Glion, Switzerland, 1976, called for a reinterpretation of

³⁸ M. Mesarovic and E. Pestel, Mankind at the Turning Point. The Second Report of the Club of Rome. (New York: Dutton, 1974).

A variation on this proposal has been made by Dr. Wassily Leontief who directed an international team of economists on a study, "The Future of the World Economy" for the United Nations. He advocated a growth rate of 3.6% in the economy of developed countries and 6.9% for the developing countries by the year 2000. See the article by Barbara Beckwith, "Strategy: Survive by Being Wise Stewards of Planet Earth" in Survival (February, 1977), p. 39.

³⁹ "Science, and Technology for Human Development", Anticipation, XIX (1974).

the relationship between God and nature in terms of a dynamic view of creation.⁴⁰

Our presentation is not only a dynamic view of creation but a dynamic view of the total spectrum of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos.

If this pre-occupation of mind were to be adopted by our leading scientists, technologists and economists much would be done to reduce the threat to the survival of this planet. Preaching which also adopts this kind of Geistesbeschäftigung and ethics would serve to challenge the world of science, technology and economics to make a rapid transition to a just and sustainable society.

⁴⁰The Contribution of Faith, Science and Technology in the Struggle for a Just and Sustainable Society (Glion, Switzerland: Church and Society Working Group, World Council of Churches, May 1976), p.17.

CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

I. We have shown that the selection of the communal hymnic psalms for our textual material was adequate for presenting the full spectrum of protology and societal ethos. The total spectrum is part of the framework and mind-set of the author or authors, even when the full spectrum is partially expressed or when protology occurs on its own.

II. Consideration of the loci of the motifs of creation, sustenance, justice and sustainability has brought to light the fact that the motifs of creation were placed ancillary to those of sustenance and that the motifs of justice and sustainability were ancillary to those of protology. This fact together with the fact of the greater frequency of the motifs of God's sustenance supports the conclusion that in the tradition history of the communal hymnic psalms, the Israelite conceptions of creation, justice and sustainability grew out of the Israelite experience of and faith in God's sustaining work.

III. The spread of the motifs just mentioned over a wide range of generic categories, viz., general hymns of praise, victory songs, thanksgiving songs, Zion songs, pilgrim songs, communal royal hymns and enthronement hymns, has led us to the conclusion that the motifs do not represent a separate genre but constitute an ideology and

world view of interdependence that was not dependent upon genre.

IV. In some sections of the text, the setting for the 'interdependence' could be ascertained with some degree of probability. In other sections there was a lack of evidence to make any such determination. The setting of the Cult for the deposit of the textual material enabled that material to be preserved in the history of traditions, thereby transmitting the world view of 'interdependence'. The settings of Kingship, the Gate and the Sages were also reflected in the text. The reality of these institutions could be identified as the background for the origin and perpetuation of some of these motifs.

V. The Israelite world view represented by these motifs consists of the interdependence of protology and societal ethos. This view conceived of nature as the created world order participating not only in protology and societal ethos separately but also in the interdependence of the two. Such participation amounts to the God-humanity-nature relationship.

VI. A distinction was made between the Israelite world view and that of our own, particularly that which derives from a phenomenological and existential outlook. There was a recognition that the meaning of the author of the text was a valid meaning, but that it was not the only meaning that could be derived from the text. The meaning

as the interpreter conceived and understood it could also be valid. Thus a valid interpretation could be made by making the above distinction.

VII. The hermeneutic of Gadamer and Pannenberg revealed that a merging of horizons (Horizontverschmelzung) took place when the text confronted the interpreter. Pannenberg corrected the 'confrontation' terminology in order to preserve the predicative structure of the language describing the 'fusion of horizons'.

VIII. The concepts of continuity and discontinuity in Gerhard von Rad's hermeneutic of tradition history enabled us to distinguish between what aspects of the tradition of 'interdependence' that we could accept and what aspects we may reject. For example we may accept the view that God is our Sustainer, but reject the view that he sustains any one nation at the expense of another. We may accept the view that human beings are called by God to the task of stewardship of the created world order, but reject any view of human dominion which denies the created world order the right to exist for its own sake or for God's purposes.

IX. The significance for preaching on the 'interdependence' is that in the process of hermeneutical interpretation, our world view may be modified as it merges with the Israelite world view. The non-dualistic stance of this Israelite view enables us to relate properly

with God and with the created world order. This enables us to praise God for what he is doing in protology and guides us to our role of stewardship in societal ethos. Preaching based on such hermeneutics therefore leads us to discover the need of humanity to make a transition to a just and sustainable world society.

X. Preaching in the context of worship which pays attention to the value of oral communication is more likely to bring a response from its hearers than preaching which is prosaic. The *Geistesbeschäftigung* inherent in the world view of the 'interdependence' has the power to bring a response at the cognitive, conative and emotive levels. When it becomes prominent in preaching, the hearers can be motivated towards their duty of stewardship of God's creation and towards their own transition to justice and sustainability.

XI. In the world view of 'interdependence' that we adopt from the merging of horizons both in the hermeneutic of interpretation and in the proclamation of preaching, there comes a recognition that the sovereignty of God can penetrate the life of our own institutions of justice and world order, transforming them to the end that they too may work toward a just and sustainable world society.

XII. The faith-response to the threat to the earth and its biosphere is one where the Church learns to recognize the reality of this threat and to proclaim through

her preaching such a message of 'interdependence' that people will want to remove that threat.

XIII. Preaching can be the vehicle of communication whereby the world of science, technology and economics is challenged with the mind-set of 'interdependence' to work for a just and sustainable society where the quality of life is improved and the survival of the whole created order is ensured.

XIV. Preaching on 'interdependence' is mandatory for the Church. Participating in it through the God-humanity-nature relationship, the Church must set the pattern and life style for being stewards of planet earth.

XV. The communal hymnic psalms deserve a prominent place in our preaching and worship.

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